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Super cyclone hits northeastern Australia

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House to restore P70-M pork barrel for each member

ACROSS / A11

Proposal by Congress to divide ARMM denounced

NEWS / A2

Leave soldiers alone, Malacañang tells opposition

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Cops violated Dinky's rights, CHR execs say

By Norman Bordadora, Christine O. Avendaño and Margaux C. Ortiz

THE HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS OF FORMER Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman were violated when she was arrested on Friday by Manila police for strolling on Roxas Boulevard while wearing a black T-shirt with the message "Patalsikin na. NOW NA! (Oust now!)," according

COPS/ A5

Cebu women's group cited for domestic violence fight

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IN CEBU, MEN WHO BEAT THEIR WIVES OR abuse their children do serious jail time.

Unlike in other parts of the country, cases of wife-beating, incest, child abuse and marital rape are not swept under the rug in the city.

Thanks to Lihok Pilipina Foundation Inc., recently cited as the outstanding institution in the

CEBU/ A6

Attacks on leftists mount

Student activist killed; peasant leader hurt but wife, son slain

By Edgar Alejo and Gil Francis G. Arevalo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

IN MOUNTING VIOLENCE against militants, unidentified men yesterday shot dead the wife and son of a peasant leader in Zambales while gravely wounding him, hours after a student leader was gunned down by an assassin in Legazpi City in Albay.

The victims were among more than 100 people linked to militant groups murdered since 2001 in attacks around the country that had outraged Amnesty International and which leftists said were part of political repression.

The militants blamed the killings on the security forces of the Arroyo administration.

At 10:30 p.m. on Sunday night in Legazpi, 20-year-old journalism student Cris Hugo was shot and killed while he was walking home with his professor.

Hugo was Bicol regional coordinator of the League of Filipino Students, a 10,000-strong nationwide student organization formed in 1977 as an alliance against tuition increases. It has chapters in prominent universities, colleges and secondary schools all over the country.

The professor, Gremil Naz, was not harmed, indicating that Hugo, a student at Bicol University, was the specific target.

Hugo was rushed to the nearest hospital but was declared dead on arrival.

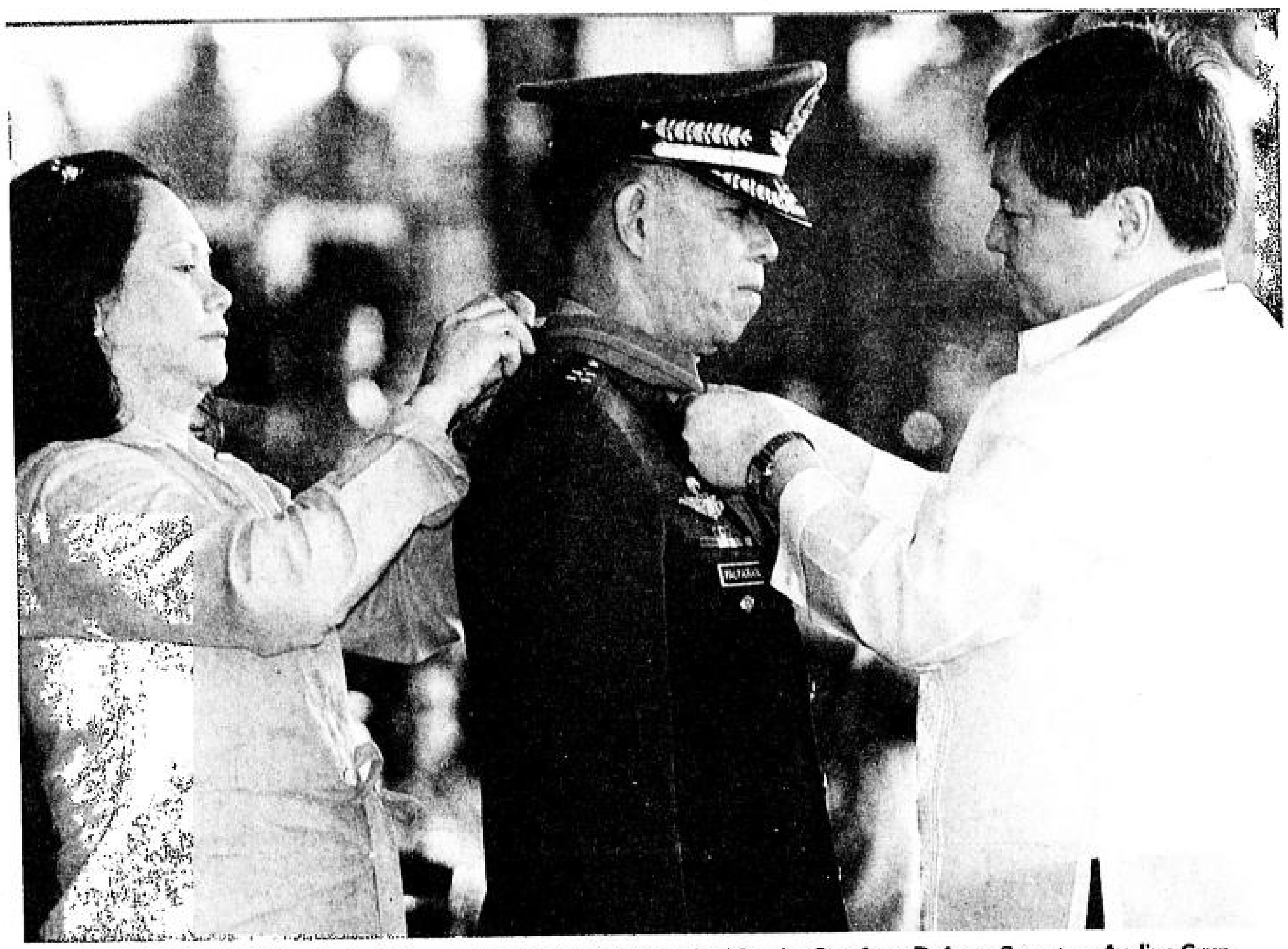
Initial investigation showed the killer was one of two men on a motorcycle.

What confused investigators was that while a witness said the killer was carrying a long firearm, the slug found in Hugo's body had come from a .45-cal. pistol.

A shell found at the scene was also from a .45, police said.

Yesterday's attack on Amante Abelon, his wife and 5-year-old son in Castillejos, Zambales, coin-

ATTACKS/ A4



CONTROVERSIAL Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan receives the Distinguished Service Star from Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz during the Philippine Army's founding day ceremonies at Fort Bonifacio. At left is Palparan's wife. JOAN BONDOC

Palparan honored for hurting Reds

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan
and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

HIS COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN may have left an appalling record of human rights abuses in its wake but he deserved the Distinguished Service Star for "hurting" the communist movement.

This was the accolade Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. received from his peers yesterday as colleagues fiercely defended him during the 109th anniversary celebration of the Philippine Army at Fort Bonifacio.

As Palparan savored the award, his bitterest enemies, the communist New People's Army, warned that its fighters would eventually get him.

Palparan received the highest military administrative award for his "eminently meritorious and valuable service" rendered as commander of the 8th Infantry Division in Samar province last year.

It was in Samar during his stay there that many leftists fell.

Palparan said he was thankful for the citation but it was more important for him to get the job done.

PALPARAN/ A4

Gonzalez now favors lesser raps vs 3 GIs

By Armand N. Nocum

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez, clarifying a statement that has sparked an uproar, yesterday said he was considering dropping charges of rape against three US Marines in favor of a lesser offense—possibly as "accessories" or "accomplices"—but would pursue the case against a fourth serviceman.

Prosecutors last year charged four American servicemen with raping a 22-year-old Filipino woman while on furlough at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1 after they participated in a joint RP-US counterterrorism exercise.

Following an appeal by defense lawyers, the Department of Justice is reviewing the charges before the Marines are arraigned on March 24.

"What I'm studying now is whether the culpability of all these people is the same," Gonzalez told reporters. He denied an Agence France-Presse report on Sunday that charges might be dropped against three of the four accused.

"I do not think so," he said.

"I think it's a question of [the] particular nature of their participation," he said. "(It's) not necessary that they will be acquitted."

The AFP report quoted Gonzalez as saying: "I think not all of them should be charged, but Smith should be charged." He was referring to Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, the principal accused.

The woman who had accused the servicemen of raping her said she and her parents were "very upset" by Gonzalez's reported position.

"I just want to point out: Does he have a daughter or a granddaughter? Is he a father or what?" said the woman, a college graduate from Zamboanga City.

Gonzalez on Monday said the charges against three of the servicemen could be downgraded from "principal" to "accessory" or "accomplice."

The soldiers were identified as Smith, SSgt. Chad Carpentier and Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis.

But Gonzalez stressed that the final decision remained with Judge Renato Dilag of the Olongapo City court who would try the case.

"So, if I say that there is no proba-

GONZALEZ/ A5

REP. Satur Ocampo presents photos of then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with militant leaders at the height of protests calling for the ouster of Joseph Estrada. JOAN BONDOC

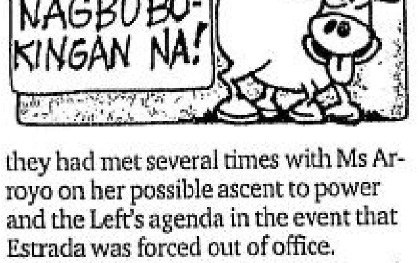
4 militant lawmakers also accuse GMA of conspiracy

By Norman Bordadora,
Michael Lim Ubac
and Christine O. Avendaño

FOUR PARTY-LIST CONGRESSMEN charged with rebellion by the administration have turned the tables on President Macapagal-Arroyo, claiming that they and Ms Arroyo, then the Vice President, had conspired in late 2000 to oust President Joseph Estrada.

At that time, the impeached Estrada was on trial in the Senate on charges of bribery, corruption, betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the Constitution.

Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador and Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano said they had met several times with Ms Arroyo on her possible ascent to power and the Left's agenda in the event that Estrada was forced out of office.


NAKOW! NAGBUBUKINGAN NA!

"If such a rebellion case [against the President] would prosper, I'd be willing to turn state witness against her," Casiño told reporters at the "Espresso sa Kongreso" news forum.

4 MILITANT/ A4

Poll fraud witness now gov't volunteer

By Fe Zamora
and Jerry E. Esplanada

A CASH-STRAPPED MICHELANGELO Zuce has joined a Malacañang task force against "jueteng," the illegal numbers racket, in what could be a major blow to opposition efforts to reopen its impeachment case against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The 30-year-old Zuce, a former Malacañang political operative, surfaced in August last year in the midst of calls for the resignation of Ms Arroyo and offered evidence purporting to support accusations that she stole the May 2004 presidential election.

Lawyer Liwayway Vinzons Chato said Zuce, who had been under her "protection" since last year, had moved out of his safe house and had not contacted her.

"I don't know where he is. He is no longer under my care," Chato told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview. "It's difficult to maintain a witness protection program if you don't have money. We cannot support him over the long haul," Chato said.

Mayor Edward Hagedorn of Puerto Princesa City told the INQUIRER that Zuce, who is built like a sumo wrestler, had called him up, volunteering his services in the government campaign against jueteng.

"The timing was OK," said Hagedorn, who is head of the Palace task force against illegal gambling. Hagedorn said he was organizing a team to monitor the Small Town Lottery, or STL, upon the request of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

"He's left his so-called friends in the opposition," said Hagedorn. "He ruled out appearing in another Senate inquiry. He feared he might commit perjury."

POLL/ A6

ERSTWHILE opposition witness Michelangelo Zuce surfaces to declare his support for the government's Small Town Lottery project. At left is Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northeastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, while Southern Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/03/20/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

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No division in House on pork

By Michael Lim Ubac

OLD WAYS APPARENTLY DIE HARD.

In a matter of days, the House of Representatives will restore the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), or pork barrel, of each congressman to its previous amount of P70 million from the current P40 million.

Restoring the PDAF was one of the conditions imposed by the legislators – from both sides of the political fence—before they would adopt this week the proposed P1-trillion national budget for 2006.

"Yes, we want it restored to P60 or P70 million," said House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles in a text message.

Asked if the chamber was only awaiting a signal from President Macapagal-Arroyo, Nograles said: "Gloria has nothing to do with pork. It's Congress who will restore it in the budget."

Speaker Jose de Venecia, who has the last say on the PDAF, wants the biggest budget ever crafted by the House passed today, or Wednesday at the latest.

In an earlier interview, De Venecia said he would not object to the restoration of the P70-million PDAF for each House member subject to two conditions: The performance of the peso and the value-added tax collections.

"We have to make sure that revenues are going up first," he said.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, appropriations committee chair, said the last time he looked, the national budget still contained a P6.2-billion outlay for the PDAF of both the members of the House and the Senate (P40 million for each congressman and P120 million for each senator).

But Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos told the INQUIRER that negotiations on the amount of the PDAF had been going on behind closed doors while the budgets of the different government agencies were being debated by the plenary the past two weeks.

Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, who steered the expanded value-added tax measure through the House as chair of the ways and means committee, projected that VAT revenues this year would reach P246 billion (including P75 billion as a result of the rate increase) and about P60 billion for sin taxes.

The PADF is a provision in the national budget that allocates funds to legislators in order to fund projects in their districts. It is also known as pork barrel and is an admitted source of kickbacks and commissions for many legislators.

In 2004 and 2005, the pork barrel was reduced to P40 million (from P70 million) for each member of the House and to P120 million (from P200 million) for each senator.

The President herself then had called for cuts in the PDAF as part of the government's cost-cutting measures to tame the budget deficit.

But now claiming that the fiscal crisis was over, the House wants the pork barrel restored to its previous levels.

One way to do this would be to insert the pork in the budgets of certain government agencies.

Last Thursday, however, the minority members of the House, through Deputy Minority Leader Rolex Suplico, approved the P62-billion budget of the Department of Public Works and Highways in its entirety, effectively preventing administration lawmakers from delaying its passage to allow for the insertion of additional pork.

Minority Leader Francis Escudero said the minority decided not to challenge a single item in the DPWH outlay, lest they be accused of delaying the national budget.

"Several lawmakers would have wanted to prolong debates on the DPWH budget for reasons you and I know," he said.

Leave soldiers alone, Palace tells foes

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY TOLD THE opposition to leave the soldiers alone as it shot down their plan to hold dialogues with the military parallel with the meetings being planned by President Macapagal-Arroyo herself.

Palace officials said it was the President's policy to let the military solve its own problems with the least interference from politicians.

"The planned dialogue of the opposition with the soldiery is just an anti-administration ploy no matter how one looks at it. If they really want to help, we suggest that they leave our soldiers alone to the performance of their duty," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a briefing.

With the President set to start her dialogues with the military soon, Rep. Francis Escudero on Sunday revealed a similar plan by the opposition to hold talks with the soldiers to "listen to what they have to say."

Bunye said the President fully supported Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga's five-point guidance insulating the military from politics.

"The AFP leadership is engaged in the formidable task of healing the wounds inflicted by previous attempts to exploit the soldiery in plots to overthrow the government. Let us allow the command to repair whatever damage has been done and restore the AFP to its premiere role of protecting the people and upholding the Constitution," Bunye said.

Presidential adviser on legal affairs Gabriel Claudio said the insulation of the military from politics came about after the tense stand-off among Marines in Fort Bonifacio last month.

Two days earlier, on Feb. 24, President Arroyo had declared a state of national emergency on uncovering a plot by some ranking military officers, communist guerrillas and members of the opposition to oust her.

"The President has given the AFP leadership wide latitude in dealing with military matters," Claudio said in an interview.

He said that unlike the President who was the Commander in Chief, the opposition had no authority to hold dialogues with the soldiers.

"Conducting a dialogue on the concerns of the military is well within the authority and functions of the President that cannot be undertaken by ordinary civilians," he said.

From Lingayen, Pangasinan, former President Fidel Ramos weighed in, saying politicians should leave soldiers and policemen alone to do their jobs and not drag them into political wars.

"Let's not subject the [military] and the police to the stuff of wars by politicians. *Hila dito, hila doon.* (It's become a tug-of-war.) Leave them alone to do their jobs. They're already undermanned, underpaid and overstretched [over] 7,000 islands," Ramos told reporters on Monday.

Ramos was the guest speaker at the opening of the Ilocos Region Athletic Association meet at the Narciso Ramos Sports and Civic Center.

The former president said that if the next people power revolt did not have the support of the "great, great, great majority of the police and the Army on one side together, *magbabarilan yan* (they will end up shooting at each other) and you [will] have civil war in the Philippines."

He said this was the strongest argument to adopt the parliamentary system of government.

"Let us create a system that will make it easier for us to change the government, if we have to, without involving the Armed Forces anymore," Ramos said. *With a report from Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Defense chief vows no whitewash

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

DEFENSE SECRETARY AVELINO CRUZ JR. said yesterday there would be no whitewash in the military's probe of an alleged coup attempt which President Macapagal-Arroyo used to justify her proclamation of a week-long state of national emergency late last month.

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines must ensure that there will be no whitewash, as we assure everyone that there will also be no witch hunt," Cruz said in a speech marking the 109th anniversary of the Philippine Army. "There must be no sacred cows in our organization but there must also be no sacrificial lambs," he added.

Cruz spoke mostly about the need for members of the military to avoid partisan politics and remain professional soldiers, which included the readiness to take the consequences of their conduct.

But even as he spoke of military firmness and fairness in the wake of the alleged coup attempt, not all soldiers implicated in the alleged plot appeared to be treated equally. While Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and other Army Scout Rangers have been recommended for court-martial, Col. Ariel Querubin and other members of the Marine Corps appear to be getting more lenient treatment.

Despite his admission last Feb. 26 that he had planned to lead "majority" of the Marine Corps in protest rallies at Edsa last Feb. 24, Querubin has not been restricted to quarters nor is being investigated for his role in the alleged plot to topple Ms Arroyo among disgruntled soldiers, communists and opposition politicians.

Instead, Querubin and other Marine officers are being investigated for the Feb. 26 standoff at the Marine headquarters prompted by the unceremonious relief of Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda as commandant of the Marines.

"We're looking at his (Querubin's) behavior during the Feb. 26 Marine incident," the Navy's chief, Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga, told reporters at the Army's anniversary celebration at Fort Bonifacio.

He said Querubin was being investigated under the Articles of War for possible insubordination, conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline.

Mayuga said he was leaving the investigation up to Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga, the new Marine commandant. Asked why Querubin had not been restricted to quarters, like Lim and the other Scout Rangers, Mayuga said that, too, depended on Allaga.

"I don't think that's kid-glove treatment," Mayuga said.

The Army announced last Saturday that it had wrapped up its investigation of 59 officers and 37 enlisted men, mostly from the First Scout Rangers Regiment which Lim had headed, in connection with the Feb. 24 plot. It said the report recommended the court-martial of Lim and 14 other officers on charges of mutiny and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline.

Contrary to what he stated last Saturday, Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said yesterday he had not yet submitted his report on the investigation to AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga "because there are some revisions that we have to make." He did not elaborate.

GMA no-show at Army rites; no big deal – Bunye

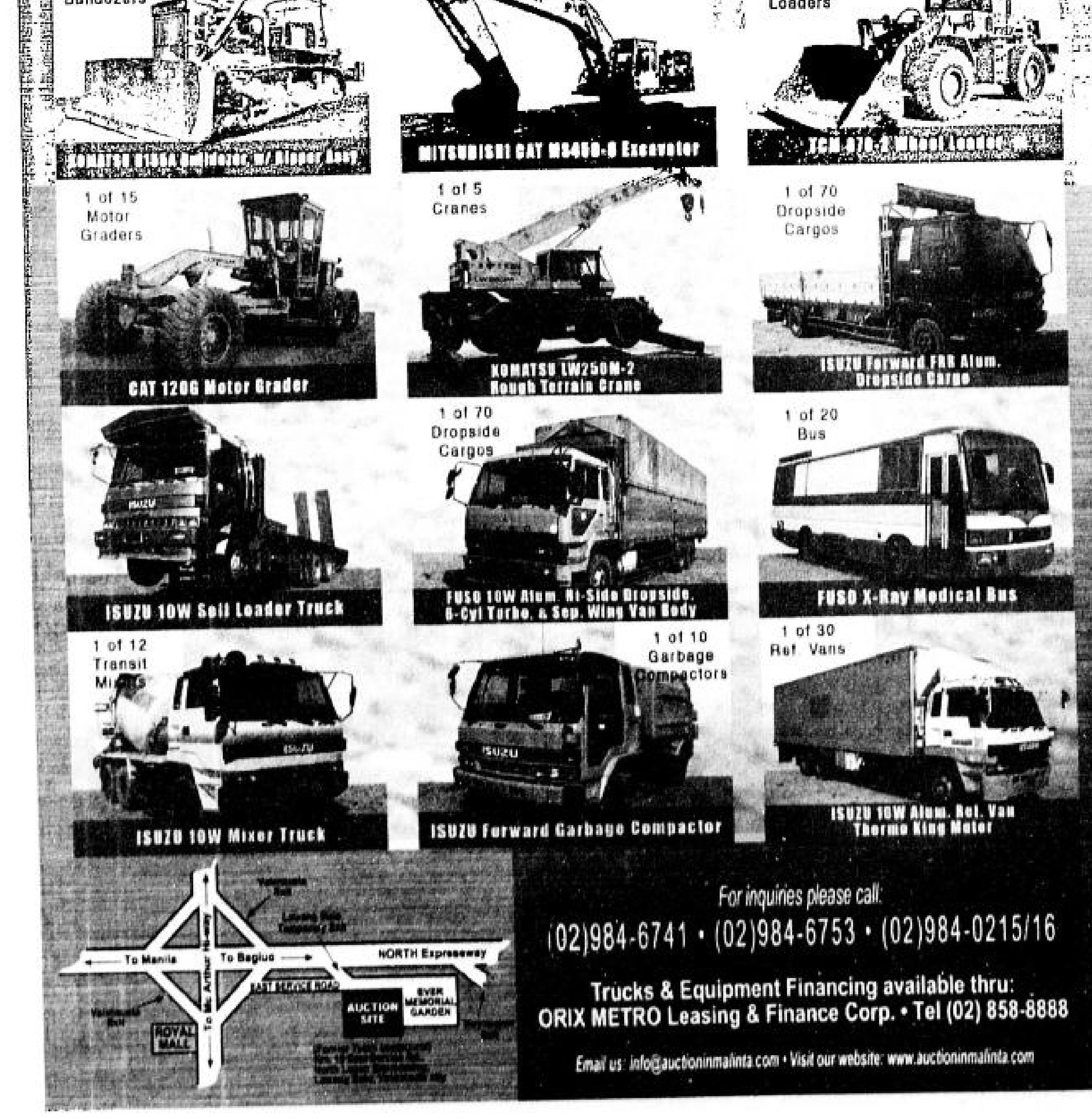
PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WAS A NO-show at the 109th anniversary of Philippine Army yesterday and Malacañang quickly said this was no big deal although she appeared to have a relatively light schedule.

The President had only one appointment yesterday and that was at a Bureau of Customs warehouse in Tondo where she was to inspect goods, seized by the authorities at the 168 Mall in Divisoria last week.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the schedule of the President was determined by the appointments office.

"I dont think we need to make a big issue out of this non-attendance of the President in this anniversary," Bunye told reporters.

Christine O. Avendaño



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Defensor denies gov't agents tailing 2 PDI journalists

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY DENIED THAT two INQUIRER staffers who had written enterprising stories on the recent state of affairs in government and the military were being tailed by the authorities, but hinted the two may have been caught up in the ongoing surveillance of supposed financiers of the aborted Feb. 24 coup.

"Let me assure you this: We have no paranoia against the media and we have no intention of spooking the media. We are in a security situation where we would rather spend our resources against destabilizers, organized criminal groups, smugglers and other personalities, including out-and-out rebels," said Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor.

Defensor was reacting to reports in another daily yesterday that said an INQUIRER editor and a senior reporter had met with a suspected financier of the failed coup on two successive Mondays – March 6 and 13. Radio reports later named the two as desk editor Gerry Lirio and senior reporter Fe Zamora.

"Fe Zamora and Gerry Lirio are respected journalists. I know them and they are friends of mine. I have not seen any writings of [the two] that would constitute something seditious," Defensor said.

If anything, Defensor said, Lirio's recent article on the supposed video of the alleged break-in at the House of Representatives in January 2005 during which election returns were allegedly switched was troubling.

"The video brouhaha did not amount to anything. I didn't say anything about Gerry Lirio. I only said that I hoped that he wouldn't pay any mind to the report because there are many people who want to make money out of audio and video recordings linked to the Hello Garci scandal since these are very marketable," Defensor said.

He added: "It could be that Gerry and Fe are not being monitored but they (authorities) are trying to get to the financiers. But let me assure Gerry and Fe that we will not do that to them or anyone else in media."

For their part, Lirio and Zamora denied meeting with a Chinese-Filipino coup financier.

"I was at Libis the Monday it was said I met with the financier but I was attending the birthday party of a reporter's mother who happens to be Chinese. The following Monday I was in Pasig but I was there to help a reporter who needed help with his car," Lirio said yesterday.

"The AFP knows Monday is my color-coding day. I don't leave my house on that day. I also have not been out with Gerry on any interviews the past month," Zamora said.

ULTRA STAMPEDE

ABS-CBN lawyers accuse DOJ of prejudging case

By Armand N. Nocum

LAWYERS OF BROADCAST GIANT ABS-CBN accused the Department of Justice of "institutional bias" as the first preliminary investigation into the PhilSports Arena stampede which left 71 people dead and hundreds injured last Feb. 4 got under way yesterday.

In claiming bias, the ABS-CBN lawyers showed video clips showing Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez saying in interviews that officials of the network might be held accountable for the incident.

Gonzalez denied the charge, saying that he did not say categorically that Gabby Lopez III, chief executive officer of ABS-CBN, would be found "guilty" in a possible civil complaint lodged against him for the tragedy.

"There is no prejudgment, that is why there is an investigation," Gonzalez said. Seventeen employees and officers of ABS-CBN are facing a criminal complaint of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide and multiple injuries in the aftermath of the deadly stampede in Pasig City.

But despite his assurance, Gonzalez stepped up his attack on Lopez, saying, "I'll bet everything I have that they are responsible at least on the civil aspect."

He noted that Lopez had publicly declared that he would take full responsibility for the stampede.

Lawyer Reghis Puno, former interior undersecretary and now lead counsel of the Lopezes, asked that the five-man DOJ panel conducting the preliminary investigation inhibit themselves from the case after calling attention to the alleged bias.

Puno told the panel that the DOJ and the National Bureau of Investigation were obviously in a rush to prosecute officials and staff of the network.

Puno noted that the NBI, which examined the circumstances surrounding the stampede, had submitted its findings before the DOJ on March 8. On the same day, he said, the panel immediately issued subpoenas ordering the respondents to attend the hearing.

Senior State Prosecutors Leo Dacera and State Prosecutor Peter Ong, leading members of the panel, dismissed Puno's assertion.

Ong said that the panel could not be accused of being biased since it was not the one which conducted the investigation into the stampede. He added that the subpoenas were released early to give the parties enough time to prepare a defense.

"We only wanted to hasten the process for all the parties. We are doing this to prove that the victims have a right in our judicial process," Ong said.

Criminally charged for the stampede were ABS-CBN executives Charo Santos-Concio, executive vice president of ABS-CBN and head of the network s Entertainment Group; "Wowowee" game show host Willie Revillame; Maria Socorro Vidanes, senior vice president for television production; Marilou Almaden, executive producer, and Cipriano Luspo, assistant vice president and head of security of ABS-CBN.

Also charged were Moly Stewart, "Wowowee" executive producer and manager; Harold James Nueva, associate producers for sets and technical; Norberto Vidanes, "Wowowee" director; Rey Cayabyab, assistant location manager and security coordinator; Francisco Rivera, ABS-CBN's location manager; Mel Feliciano, the show's assistant director; and Jean Owen Garcia, floor director.

NBI Acting Director Nestor Mantaring also recommended the filing of administrative sanctions against Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio before the Department of Interior and Local Government since he was the one who granted ABS-CBN the permit to hold the event at the said venue despite its limited capacity.

Estrada to defend himself in plunder trial tomorrow

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS DIRECTED THE Philippine National Police to present former President Joseph Estrada in court on Wednesday so he can personally defend himself for the first time in his five-year-old trial on plunder and perjury charges.

Sandiganbayan Sheriff Ed Urieta said security would be tight in and out of the antigraft court as the authorities expect Estrada's supporters to mass outside in a demonstration of support for the ousted leader and protest against his continued detention.

Urieta said photographers will not be allowed into the court and there will be no live television or radio coverage of the trial from inside the courtroom pursuant to a recent Supreme Court decision. He said only accredited journalists and observers will be allowed inside the court during the proceedings.

It was not clear how long Estrada's testimony would take or when the antigraft court would reach a verdict. He is accused of salting away up to P4.1 billion, mostly in the form of kickbacks and bribes from illegal gambling operators.

Raymond Fortun, one of his lawyers, said Estrada would "just fill in the blanks" to strengthen denials he took kickbacks from tobacco taxes and money from gambling syndicates while in office for 31 months.

"There are many things that only the President himself can clarify," Fortun told Reuters, citing accusations that Estrada had ordered the heads of the Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System to invest in a listed gaming company owned by an associate.

Estrada, 68, is also expected to tell his own version of accusations made by a Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson that he took money from operators of "jueteng," an illegal numbers game, as well as kickbacks from tobacco taxes.

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Gunmen attack cockpit; 5 killed

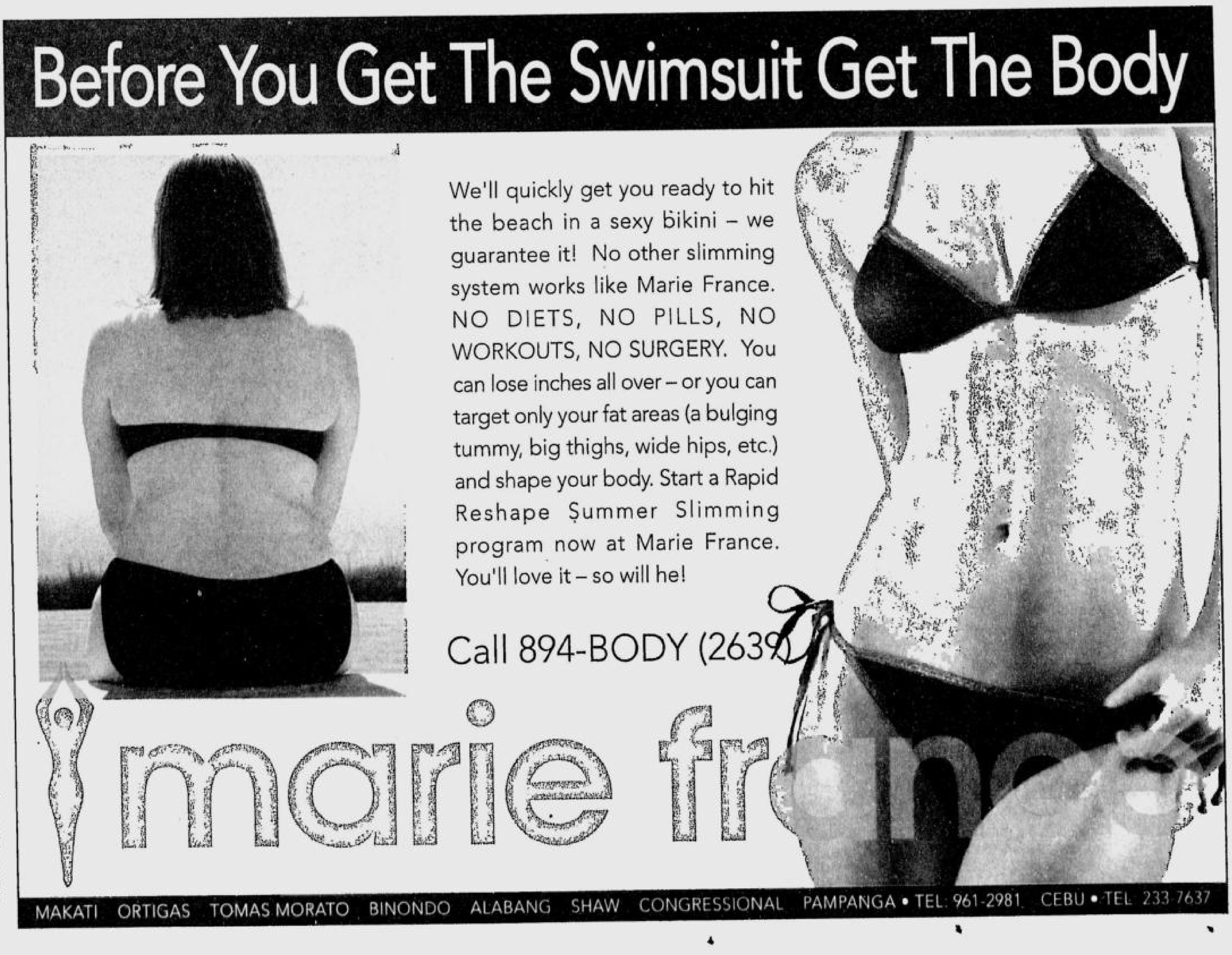
CABANATUAN CITY—Armed men attacked a cockpit arena in Gapan City, Nueva Ecija, yesterday and shot dead five persons, police said.

Reports gathered from the police and the provincial information office said at least 10 men aboard a van arrived at the cockpit in Barangay Pambuan at 2:30 p.m. and started firing their guns while a cockfight was being staged.

Killed in the attack were Dr. Juanito Reyes, cockpit security men identified only as "Kare" and "Pablo," and Erick and Ebeth Pascual, sons of the cockpit owner Boy Pascual.

Senior Supt. Alex Paul Monteagudo, Nueva Ecija police director, said the suspects' target could have been the cockpit owner.

Reports said one of the victims, Ebeth Pascual, was the chair of the Sangguniang Kabataan in Gapan City. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



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Attacks on leftists mount

From page A1

cided with ceremonies in Fort Bonifacio where Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan received the Distinguished Service Star for his campaign against communist insurgents. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Human rights groups have accused Palparan, who operates in Central Luzon, of responsibility in the killing of left-wing dissidents—an allegation the general denies.

A militant leader in Davao City, Reunil Mortejo, was also the victim of an attack last weekend. Armed men abducted him and held him briefly, telling him to stop his activities, before he was freed.

Abelon, coordinator of the party-list group Anakpawis in Zambales and vice chair of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon, was on a motorcycle with his wife and son when they were fired upon by two men.

No witness

Abelon was taken to the James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital in Olongapo City.

As of 6:30 last night, he was undergoing surgery for multiple bullet wounds, said hospital administrator Ferdinand Magrata.

Abelon's wife Agnes, 30, and son Elvin John died instantly in the shooting in Barangay San Pablo, police said.

Zambales police chief Senior Supt. Arrazad Subong said the investigation could not proceed because the police had no other eyewitnesses in the attack except for Abelon.

Death threats

Hugo had been receiving death threats since last year, said Ryan Ramirez, spokesperson of Anakbayan in Bicol, who was with the victim hours before the shooting occurred.

Ramirez said Hugo was arrested while leading a protest rally in Guinobatan town during President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to Albay on Feb. 2.

Politically motivated

In September last year, Hugo, who was from Irosin, Sorsogon, where his father is a policeman, was also questioned by the Sorsogon police.

Hugo's colleagues in the LFS and other groups expressed outrage over his death.

"Whoever did this to Cris must be punished. We [believe] this killing was politically motivated and we hold the Arroyo government accountable," LFS national chair Vencer Crisostomo said.

Harassed on campus

"These extrajudicial killings are outrageous. The Filipino people cannot allow these things to happen. We cannot allow Arroyo's minions to kill the students and the youth who are the future of this nation," Crisostomo said.

A classmate, who requested anonymity, said that aside from receiving death threats since last year, Hugo had confided in him that he was harassed by six armed men in the university on Jan. 24.

"He was really nervous and frightened. But he said that it was only a bluff so there was nothing to worry about and that he was ready to face them the next time," said the classmate.

Prof. Ping Peralta said Hugo had been very active in his classes in the college of arts and letters.

"Aside from being the spokesperson of the League of Filipino Students, Cris was the new chancellor of the Alpha Phi Omega at Bicol University. He was a responsible activist," Peralta said.

On the list

Another youth activist, who requested anonymity for security reasons, claimed that military men from Camp Simeon Ola, which is walking distance from the university, were behind Hugo's killing.

"At least four of us are on the list, either for interrogation or liquidation. They know that we will join any mass protests against the present administration. For sure they're monitoring us now, including our boardinghouses and daily schedules in school," he said.

Modus operandi

LFS members called for a candle-lit protest to denounce Hugo's killing, even as they vowed to intensify demonstrations against the administration.

Carl Ala, information officer of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, suspected the military was behind Abelon's murder "if you based it on their modus operandi."

"This is the (style) of the 7th ID (Infantry Division) under Palparan," he said.

"Extrajudicial killings have become state policy," Ala said.

He said Palparan's award for distinguished military service "is the height of hypocrisy."

Held in a van

Ala added: "While officers who stand up for the truth and justice are being court-martialed and slapped with rebellion charges ... loyal lapdogs of Gloria like Palparan and (Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes) Esperon get medals and commendations. This award is made of the blood of the innocents."

In Davao City, Mortejo said he had just left the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan office on Friday when a green van stopped in front of him.

The chair of Anakbayan said a man wearing a bonnet with a gun tucked in his waist asked him to get into the van and warned that he would be harmed if he resisted. Three other masked men were in the van.

In a dimly lit street, the men started asking him questions about his activities. After about 40 minutes, Mortejo said he was freed.

"I was told to stop whatever it is I am doing with my group," he said.

Climate for killings

Amnesty International recently expressed its concern over the killings of left-wing activists in the country and urged the Arroyo administration to send a clear message to security forces that extrajudicial killings would not be tolerated.

It said comments by senior government officials linking leftist groups directly to communist insurgents threatened "to create a climate within which further political killings may take place."

With reports from Luige A. del Puerto and DJ Yap in Manila and Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Palparan honored for hurting Reds

From page A1

"Thank you very much. Is this a vindication? It could be. For me, I'm just doing my job," Palparan told reporters.

Palparan's chief backer, President Macapagal-Arroyo, was not around but officials said the President did not usually attend the anniversary of the major service commands. *(See related story Page A2.)*

As always, Palparan dismissed allegations linking him to numerous atrocities.

"Those are all propaganda to destroy the image of the government," he said.

Job well done

Asked about the award, Palparan said: "I believe I deserved it. But this is not coveted, I did not ask for it ... I have never killed any militant so how could this award make me more brazen (about) killings?"

Palparan received his medal from Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon as AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga and Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. looked on.

"We are awarding him for a job well done in Samar," Esperon told reporters, adding the military could not care less about accusations of atrocities against Palparan.

"Yes, but you know, they're hurting. The Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army are hurting," Esperon said. "When their section committees and their front secretaries are neutralized, naturally they are not happy. So, well, I do not want them to be happy while they are destroying democracy."

'Butcher of Mindoro'

Esperon fired a shot at the reporters present: "Are you happy they are destroying democracy?"

The Distinguished Service Star is awarded to senior officers who had done well as commanders of a battalion or bigger units. It is not a combat medal but it is the highest administrative award and ranks higher than the Gold Cross.

Palparan has been dismissive of the allegations hurled against him. He said the killings and disappearances of activists and militant leaders were likely committed by the NPA rebels themselves.

During his stint in Samar, Palparan was denounced not only by militant groups but by local politicians for human rights abuses.

He was previously assigned to Mindoro province as head of the 204th Brigade and it was there he was dubbed the "Berdugo ng Mindoro" [Butcher of Mindoro].

He was also head of the country's peacekeeping troops in Iraq during the Angelo de la Cruz hostage drama in 2004.

Quick rise

He is now commander of the 7th Infantry Division which has jurisdiction over Central Luzon.

Palparan earned his star-rank in a relatively quick time. In less than three years, he was promoted from colonel in 2003 to major general in October last year.

After Palparan was bypassed by the Commission on Appointments last October, Senga defended him against accusations he had masterminded the "festival of killings" of left-wing leaders in Central Luzon.

"That is not fair," Senga had said, adding that he was sure Palparan did not condone extrajudicial killings.

Waiting Red fighters

Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal admitted that the NPA hit squad had long been hot on the trail of Palparan.

"He was lucky enough in Mindoro. He was only hit in his feet," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview.

"But soon, our Red fighters will get him. His time will come to receive our own concept of recognition—that with his evil deeds to the people, retribution will naturally follow," Rosal said.

The communist leader added that the CPP-NPA had also received reports from residents of the towns of San Ildefonso and San Miguel in Bulacan that Palparan had been making the rounds of barangays compelling the people to attend his so-called public assemblies.

He accused Palparan of trying to intimidate the people by waving a "wanted list," which includes the names of local residents suspected of being NPA sympathizers.

Sad day

Chanting "Butcher! Butcher!", some 300 farmers and youth activists in Angeles City yesterday put up a street gallery of photographs of victims of what they said were extrajudicial killings in Central Luzon since 2005.

Joseph Canlas, chair of Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon, called Palparan "one of the loyal protectors of the Arroyo dictatorship."

Four billboards of victims' photographs were lined up at the plaza in Angeles and at Clark where the rally stopped briefly before proceeding to Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac City.

The group later went to the wake for Tirso Cruz, a director of the United Luisita Workers Union, who was killed on March 17.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. said the award to Palparan "smacks of extreme insensitivity to the sentiments of a nation shaken by the string extrajudicial killings."

"It's a sad day for human rights when General Palparan is honored on Army Day as a role model for soldiers to emulate," Pimentel said. *With reports from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; and Philip C. Tubeza*

SOLDIERS execute snappy salutes after receiving new flak jackets issued during ceremonies marking the 109th anniversary of the Philippine Army. AFP

Sison says GMA killing peace talks

COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison has accused President Macapagal-Arroyo of killing the peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front.

Sison said Ms Arroyo did this when she "converted" the list of people who enjoyed safety guarantees under the peace process into a list of people to be arrested for involvement in an alleged plot to overthrow her.

In an e-mailed statement to the INQUIRER, Sison—now living in the Netherlands—described what Ms Arroyo did as "a vicious act of treachery."

He said Ms Arroyo had breached many joint agreements and put up so many obstacles that made the resumption of the peace talks totally impossible.

The NDF pulled out of the talks in August 2004 to protest the government's failure to have the CPP, the New People's Army and Sison removed from the United States' and European Union's terrorist lists. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

4 militant lawmakers also accuse GMA of conspiracy

From page A1

Ms Arroyo's political adviser, Gabriel Claudio, said the President had never advocated or participated in any plan to overthrow the Estrada administration through violent or extraconstitutional means.

"Her only role in the change of government was to assume the presidency by operation of law after it had been rendered vacant," Claudio said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye chose to ignore the opposition's claim that Ms Arroyo could be held liable for rebellion for her active participation in the ouster moves against Estrada.

"That's their opinion," Bunye told reporters. "But the fact is the President assumed office, was even elected after that, and the President continues to function."

The party-list representatives (dubbed the "Batasan 5" along with Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza), who are accused of being a part of a conspiracy by the Left, the Right and certain politicians to oust Ms Arroyo, showed cameramen and photographers pictures of Ms Arroyo's meeting with Ocampo and their detained colleague, Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran.

Arm-in-arm with militants

Ms Arroyo was also photographed arm-in-arm with militant leaders in the run-up to Edsa II. Above them was a banner that said, "Oust!" in obvious reference to Estrada.

Ocampo said Bayan Muna leaders and those of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) presented the then Vice President at St. Theresa's College in Quezon City with the militant alliance's 20-point agenda under a post-Estrada scenario, with Ms Arroyo as constitutional successor.

Another meeting, he said, was held at Ms Arroyo's residence in La Vista subdivision, also in Quezon City.

"The Supreme Court decided that what happened then was not rebellion," Ocampo said, referring to the high tribunal's decision declaring the Arroyo administration constitutional and Edsa II legitimate.

"If that was legitimate, then there shouldn't be a case of rebellion against us," he said.

Arroyo family helped NPA?

Ocampo quoted Ms Arroyo as saying at one of the meetings that her family used to help wounded New People's Army members at her house.

"She even said that her father was a good friend of my father-in-law [Armando Malay] and that there was a time when wounded rebels would be brought to their residence. She volunteered that information," Ocampo said of his banter with Ms Arroyo.

"Isn't that also rebellion?" he said.

Ocampo said Bayan Muna official Vicente Ladlad was also at the La Vista meeting.

"If Vic Ladlad was there, how come the 'star witness' (against us) Jaime Fuentes who claim that he was Ladlad's (long-time bodyguard) was not in that meeting?" the lawmaker said.

Photo as proof

The picture showing Ms Arroyo seated with Ocampo and Beltran on Nov. 16, 2000, at St. Theresa's College was proof that she, too, had plotted to oust Estrada, according to House Minority Leader Francis Escudero.

Escudero said Ms Arroyo could also be charged with rebellion for actively joining the ouster campaign against Estrada.

"Rebellion is a crime, whether you succeed or not," he said.

"There is nothing in the Revised Penal Code that says that if the rebellion or coup succeeds, it can't be called a rebellion or a coup and you will be called a hero. And if it fails, you will be called a criminal, rebel and coup plotter," said Escudero.

He noted that an accompanying story, titled "Leftist backers demand guarantees from Gloria," said it all: "She has yet to assume the presidency" yet she "expressed the hope that the united opposition, which she heads, could form a 'strong bond' with the radical groups, especially since the alliance is drafting a national agenda for a post-Estrada administration."

Same call

Escudero, who was then on the other side of the political fence with Estrada, said that then, as now, "people want the President accountable and that (he or she) should wipe out corruption in government."

"The call was also the same: Oust the President," he said. "So what's the difference? Why are the party-list lawmakers being prosecuted for the same things she did with them not so long ago?"

Casiño said the meetings they conducted with Ms Arroyo at that time were no different from the consultations they were now conducting with similar-minded groups and individuals pushing for Ms Arroyo's ouster.

"If what we did then was not rebellion, how can it be rebellion now?" Casiño said.

He said there were other meetings with personalities very close to the then Vice President on the ouster moves against Estrada.

"It's impossible that she didn't know about our talking to her people," he said.

Casiño at the time was Bayan secretary general and a convenor of PlunderWatch, one of the complainants in the impeachment complaints against Estrada.

"When we met with (Ms Arroyo) then, she didn't tell us to stop what we were doing (campaigning for Estrada's ouster)," he said.

Virador said Ms Arroyo did not directly encourage the group to move against Estrada but "you could see in her eyes how much she wanted to be President."

"It was also on record that she met with generals to discuss Estrada's removal even before Edsa II," Casiño said.

He said it was hypocritical of the administration to brand those working for Ms Arroyo's ouster rebels.

"She doesn't want what happened to Erap that installed her in power to happen to her," he said.

Casiño said that those behind Ms Arroyo at the time must have learned well from how they maneuvered Estrada's ouster in January 2001. "Their countermoves are done quite well," he said.

Correction

IN THE MARCH 20 ISSUE, a story on Page A3—"Corruption costing RP-CSC exec"—misstated the position that Guillermo Luz occupies in the Coalition Against Corruption. Luz is a member of the CAC steering committee and is not the CAC chair, the position held by Ramon del Rosario Jr.

* * *

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Cops violated Dinky's rights, CHR execs say

From page A1

to officials of the Commission on Human Rights.

Wilhelm Soriano, CHR commissioner for the National Capital Region, said he and Commissioners Elidio Mallare and Quintin Cueto had taken the position that the Manila Police District's arrest of Soliman and another Black and White Movement (BWM) leader Vicente Romano for illegal assembly was out of order.

"First, the police admitted that they arrested former Secretary Soliman and Mr. Romano without a warrant. That's a fact. Upon our investigation, we saw that the circumstances covering warrantless arrests were not present," Soriano said.

"Second, when the two were subjected to inquest proceedings, the city prosecutor did not commit them to the custody of the police [but] asked that they be released subject to further investigation. This means the evidence against them was weak," he said.

Soriano said that it appeared that the prosecutor saw that there was "not even an assembly, much more an illegal one."

"The police said the group was wearing black T-shirts and could have been planning to stage a demonstration. We say, when was wearing black shirts and planning to stage a demonstration a crime?" Soriano said.

The BWM has called for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Disciplinary action

Soriano said the commission was expected to discuss the arrest this week when CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing arrives from a trip. The other commissioner is Dominador Calamba.

"If the en banc decides that there was a violation of human rights, we will call the attention of the police. So that it will no longer be repeated, we will recommend administrative disciplinary action," Soriano said.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said Soliman, being a former government official, should have known better.

"The present policy now is calibrated preemptive response," Defensor told reporters. "If there is no rally permit, no rally can be held."

He said Malacañang supported the MPD position that at the time of the arrest, there was an assembly and somebody shouted and made the thumbs-down sign.

Judgment call

But newly appointed Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura said Soliman's arrest was a "judgment call" by the police.

"I don't know the whole details, but the police did know the situation and at that time, they probably acted on perception that there was a clear and present danger," Nachura said.

Asked whether Soliman's use of the T-shirt could be considered seditious, Nachura said: "If anti-GMA groups and known critics wear them during political activities, it's clear that they had no good intentions."

Asked whether this could be used as evidence against Soliman and Romano, he said it was possible.

"Even if the President's name was not on (the T-shirt), it's clear who these people are referring to, especially that they have already called for the resignation of the President," he said.

Be ready for consequences

Told that Soliman reportedly planned to wear the T-shirt often and distribute T-shirts to people, Nachura said: "She is free (to do so) but she must be ready for any consequences of her actions."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Palace would leave it to the police to answer whatever charges Soliman's group planned to file against them.

An official of the MPD reiterated that the policemen who arrested Soliman at Baywalk "were merely enforcing the law."

"We are duty-bound to enforce the law, which is still valid because the court has not declared it null and unconstitutional," said Supt. Arturo Paglinawan, MPD General Assignments Section head.

Paglinawan was referring to Batas Pambansa 880 or the law prohibiting illegal assembly. The law was enacted during the martial law regime of President Ferdinand Marcos.

"What they did was clearly a public assembly," Paglinawan said, adding that MPD operatives arrested Soliman and Romano after they refused to listen to police negotiators as they were about to cross Roxas Boulevard.

Paglinawan said Baywalk, a popular tourist attraction, was packed with foreigners and employees unwinding after a long week.

"They all had a right to relax and enjoy, and here was Soliman's group creating a scene," Paglinawan said.

Intelligence reports

He said the MPD had received intelligence reports prior to the arrest that Soliman and members of BWM would gather at the Aristocrat Restaurant on Roxas Boulevard in preparation for a lightning rally.

"We prohibit lightning rallies because sympathizers of the other side could sabotage the activity, leading to possible mayhem and injuries," Paglinawan said.

The police official said there was no curtailment of freedom because the MPD did not arrest the other members of the group. "The law is hard but it is the law," he said.

Ed Diansuy, CHR public information officer, expressed concern over the alleged chilling effect of the arrest of Soliman.

Gonzalez now favors lesser raps …

From page A1

ble cause against the three, for example, it's still up to the court because the case is now before the court," the secretary said.

Gonzalez said he did not know if the Department of Justice's review would be completed before the arraignment.

"I don't know whether the judge will proceed with the arraignment unless I would have submitted already my resolution," he said, adding:

"I'm trying to be ready, I'm trying my best. This is a very thick folder; you do not give justice by just reading it … you have to study … there is an international relationship involved here."

US custody

The four members of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit remain under the custody of the US Embassy after Washington turned down a request by Manila to hand them over, ignoring an arrest warrant issued by a local court in January.

In a Jan. 16 diplomatic note, the embassy invoked the 1998 Visiting Forces Agreement, saying "the US government shall continue to exercise custody until completion of all judicial proceedings."

Opposition politicians and leftist activists have protested Washington's refusal to hand over the Marines, describing it as a vote of no-confidence in the country's justice system.

"Under our law you have to prove conspiracy … beyond reasonable doubt. Conspiracy is not presumed, you must establish conspiracy as establishing the crime itself which must be proven beyond reasonable doubt," Gonzalez explained.

He said it would be "unfair" to charge all four accused as principals if they did not conspire to commit the crime.

Gonzalez said the charges against the three should be modified based on his reading of the results of the review conducted by a panel of prosecutors.

By downgrading the case, he said the three US servicemen, if found guilty, could serve from 12 to 20 years imprisonment as accomplices or accessories. But the principal accused, he said, faces the death penalty or life imprisonment of 40 years.

Gonzalez said there was no doubt that Smith should be charged as the principal, considering his admission that he had "consensual" sex with the victim.

"As long as there is evidence and there is an admission, that's it. He would have to ventilate his reasons in court. They must defend that in court," he said.

Victim upset

The woman complainant broke into sobs when reached by the INQUIRER on the phone yesterday. She was then conferring with one of her private lawyers, who said their client had been staying in Metro Manila of late.

"I can prove that all of them are guilty," said the woman.

"She's devastated and angry about that statement made by Secretary Gonzalez," said lawyer Evalyn Ursua of her client.

"It's difficult as it is to file a rape case, so it must be more traumatic [for her] to feel like the government is not being supportive." *With reports from Volt Contreras, Blanche S. Rivera and Philip C. Tubeza; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AP and Reuters*

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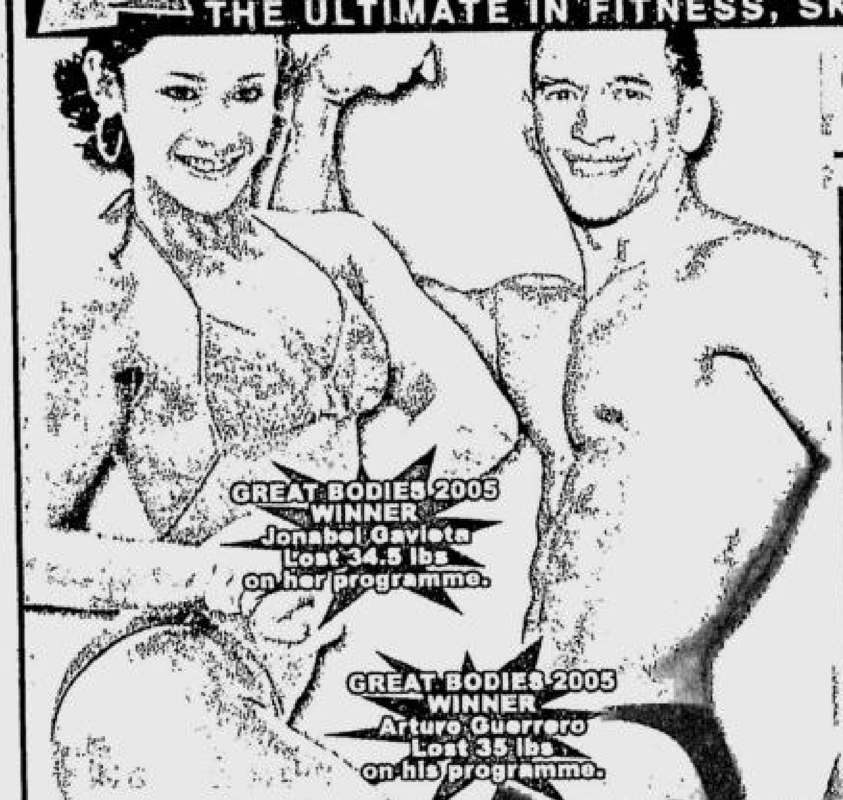
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LIHOK Pilipina Foundation's Tessie Fernandez receives the award for outstanding institution in the Visayas and Mindanao from Jon Ramon Aboitiz of the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation.

Cebu women's group cited for domestic violence fight

From page A1

Visayas and Mindanao by the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc., domestic violence is a priority issue in Cebu.

In fact, the foundation has been instrumental in making Cebu the first city in the country to pass specific ordinances penalizing domestic violence.

Cases of domestic violence are properly recorded in police blotters, perpetrators are taken to court, and victims are given legal counsel and psychological treatment.

This was not always the case.

Tessie Fernandez of Lihok Pilipina told the INQUIRER there was a time when women in Cebu would not even think of filing a case against their partners, for fear of retribution from a society that frowned on discussing "personal" matters in public.

If battered women did find the courage to complain against their partners, Fernandez said policemen would not even bother to officially record their complaints in the police blotter. Instead, the abused women were told to go home, patch up their differences with their husbands or boyfriends.

Fernandez said she only realized the extent of the problem of domestic violence in Cebu when she and her partners in Lihok Pilipina noticed a drop in attendance in their original credit programs, especially among the women.

Digging deep to find out why the women weren't coming to the meetings anymore, she discovered that three of the five women in the communities that Lihok was working in at that time were victims of domestic violence.

Fernandez also discovered that cases of domestic violence were not officially recorded because the police did not consider them as crimes. Most even dismiss the incidents as spats between lovers or family members, which are best kept a secret.

Lihok also found that some of the policemen hit their wives, and that some of the policewomen were themselves victims of abuse.

Crisis center

Thus, the Women's Integrated Support and Crisis Center (WISCC) was born in 1991, which offered temporary shelter, counseling, medical and legal assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault among women and children.

"We realized that economic empowerment through our credit program was not enough," Fernandez said. "We had to deal with domestic violence, too. We had to work double time to learn about violence."

At the start, getting the community to talk about the violence was a challenge, she said, since the victims themselves refused to talk and the authorities were not helping.

Sympathy for victims

"There were instances when the medico-legal would scold the victim for refusing to open her legs for examination," Fernandez said. "One even told a traumatized woman, 'You've already been raped, so why get all shy now?'"

Through training programs, gender sensitivity workshops, and filing more cases in court, women and children began to realize they could break the cycle of abuse.

Police and medico-legal personnel were also invited to attend the workshops and they, too, started looking at these cases in a new light—they felt sympathy for the victims.

Thus, between 1991 and 2004, the WISSC handled 2,223 cases of battery, sexual abuse, child abuse and other related cases, many of which were referred by police themselves.

Lihok Pilipina took its program a step further with the formation of the Bantay Banay (Family Watch) in 1992, realizing that domestic violence involves, not just women and children, but the entire family, especially the men.

Bantay Banay aims to get community members to watch out for each other, to come to the aid of neighbors who are victims of abuse, either by reporting cases to the authorities or by offering counseling.

Ending scourge

Bantay Banay has been replicated in 50 barangays around Cebu City and can be found in 65 cities and municipalities across the Philippines.

It has been recognized as the Best Practice for Improving the Living Environment by the UN Habitat in 2000 and by the Dubai International Awards in 2002.

Lihok Pilipina dreams that all cities and municipalities in the Philippines would pass laws against all forms of domestic violence, putting an an end to the silent scourge of society, Fernandez said.

"We believe that domestic violence, like poverty, is a priority issue that has to be resolved," she said.

Poll fraud witness now gov't volunteer

From page A1

Hagedorn quoted Zuce as telling him: "It is enough. I had been used. It would not happen again. My children became hungry as a result."

An aide to Ms Arroyo's former liaison officer for political affairs Joey Rufino, Zuce said last August that he was present when Ms Arroyo met with a group of election officials in her La Vista, Quezon City, residence in January 2004.

Zuce said Ms Arroyo appealed for help in the election. After she left the gathering, envelopes containing P30,000 each allegedly from Lilia Pineda, wife of suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo (Bong) Pineda, were distributed to the officials.

His testimony was part of the evidence that the opposition had planned to use in last year's impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo, but the proceedings were abruptly killed by her majority allies in the House of Representatives over a technicality.

Impeachment case

The opposition has announced plans to reopen the impeachment case against Ms Arroyo in July. The Constitution provides that Congress can hear only one impeachment complaint against the President a year.

Zuce is the third opposition witness to decamp. Last year, Richard Garcia, 47, and Demosthenes Abraham Riva, 46, apologized publicly to Ms Arroyo for appearing as opposition witnesses in the congressional hearings and implicating the First Family in jueteng payoffs. However, the two said they were standing by their testimony.

Chato noted that Zuce had not recanted his Senate testimony either. "He has not said anything to reverse what he had already said," she said.

Asked if Zuce's defection was a blow to the opposition, Chato acknowledged that it was a setback "for the cause of the Filipino people in knowing the truth."

Asked if the opposition had lost a witness, she said, "Never mind. I hope somebody will rise up to the occasion."

She said Zuce talked to her on Saturday about a bank mortgage on his house which was about to be foreclosed. "He asked for my help, but I cannot get financial support for him anymore," she said.

Chato said the arrangement had apparently taken a toll on the Zuces, especially the children who had to continue studying under a distance learning program. Zuce also started painting and even sold some of his works to the opposition.

Louie in 'Hello Garci'

On Sunday, Zuce sent back the L-300 van that Chato had lent him for his personal use.

Zuce went to Chato late last year after he "surfaced" as the "Louie" that former Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano had talked to in the controversial "Hello Garci" tapes.

Zuce, along with Sandra Cam, Boy Mayor and Marietta Santos, was among the witnesses that the opposition presented in hearings on the Hello Garci tapes and the jueteng payoffs involving First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Last month, Zuce told the INQUIRER that he was fighting for "principles, not just money" when he decided to testify in the Senate.

He also said there were threats on his life. He said politicians in Mindanao wanted to kill him "to gain points from the President."

Zuce said regular Bible study had opened his spiritual side, and had helped him refocus his life away from the material.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz of the Lingayen-Dagupan diocese said he understood Zuce's predicament.

Cruz, chair of the Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng, said Zuce felt he was not getting support anymore from the people who took him in as a witness.

"[Zuce] has been complaining that Vinzons-Chato does not answer his calls and he felt he had no more support. Then here comes Malacañang. So it is understandable that he gave in," said Cruz, noting that Zuce needed money. *With reports from Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and PDI Research*

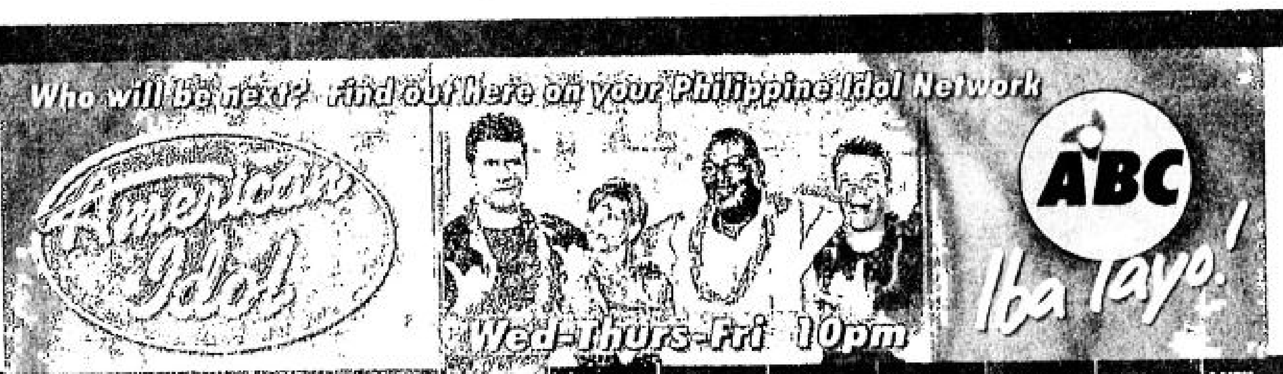
PDI PHOTO

ZUCE testifies before Senate.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Tuesday, March 21, 2006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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	[illegible]	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		Premier Snooker League				Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	TNA Impact		Guinness Book Of Record		Big News	Next Action Star		ALI	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Princess Lulu	Pinoy Big Brother		Bora			Insider
AXN		Lost (Season II)		House		Maximum Exposure (Season II)		Cold Squad		Amazon		The Amazing Race (Season IX)		Alias (Season IV)		Mondo Magic Singapore	The World's Wildest Commercials	Rescue Me	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show		Baby Looney Tunes	Codename Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Pugad Ng Agila				Anak				Minsan Minahal Kita		Tunay Na Tunay (Gets Mo, Gets Ko)				Double Vision			
Cinemax	First Target			Zulu (4:10 PM)					Another 48 Hrs.			Something To Talk About			Out For Justice (9:45 PM)			A Twist Of The Knife (11:15PM)	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport/ Global Office, CNN Bus Traveller	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Crime/Suspense		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Body Of Evidence	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Surface		Prison Break		Law & Order: Criminal Intent	
Discovery Channel		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Rides		Electric Man		Zero Hour		Wild Discovery		Hour Asia		The History Of Singapore		Zero Hour		Crime Stories	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Finals		Pool Snooker World Pool League '03 Finals		X-Games Files '03		Watersports Programming Hot Water		Table Tennis '04 Invitational C'ships	Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '05 [illegible] Billiards C'ships		Table Tennis '04 Invitational C'ships	LPGA Golf Safeway Intl Presented by Coca-Cola 2nd rd				Sportscenter Asia
ETC	The Insider Weekend	Love Shack		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 3		The O.C. 2		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Catholic Social Teaching	Angelus (3:15 PM)	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Angels Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	The Gospel Of John	EWTN Gallery	Lord, Have Mercy	The Journey Home Encore		Council Of Faith	Good Or Evil, Who Decides?	Daily Mass [illegible]		Angelus (10:15PM)	Rome Reports	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	McLeod's Daughters IV		Fungus The Bogeyman ([illegible])			Ladies Man	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		McBride The Chameleon Murder			Family Law II (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine (11:25PM)
HBO				Bring It On Again (4:15 PM)			As Good As It Gets (5:45 PM)					Deadwood Ep 11 'A Lie Agreed Upon Part 1'		Deadwood Ep 12 'A Lie Agreed Upon Part 2'		Timeline			
Hero TV	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Beyblade V Force	Crush Gear Nitro	Sorcerer Hunter	Soul Hunters	Lost Universe	Naruto	Mimo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Soul Hunters	Lost Universe
IBC 13		EZ Shop				[illegible] On The Go	IBC Express Balita	[illegible]		Home Shopping Network		ME TV		Japan Video Topics		Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Whose Wedding Is It Anyway?		Look For Less	Life & Style		Napa Style	[illegible] Designer Living	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	
MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	MTV Hits	Diyes		PunkD	Pop Inc		2006 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Hits				Get Spotted	The 2006 TRL Awards			Pimp My Ride	Bling # 106	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions		Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops		MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Africa From The Ground Up	Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster		Who's Afraid Of Designer Babies?		Top 6		Wow!		About Asia		Terrorism Week: Hijacked		Air Crash Investigation: [illegible]		Seconds From Disaster	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Wrap	Dama Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya	Teledyaryo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	Rocket Power	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Benigno Saulog				Iduyan Mo Ang Duyan Ko				Balandra Crossing				Ikaw				On The Right Track
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zenki	The Prince Of Tennis	[illegible]		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Irene	Mars	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	My Guardian Baby		News On Q	Sana'y Muling Makapiling		Irene	Romance
RPN 9	TV Shopping					Global Window		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Real Gilligan's Island		The Cut		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Thrill		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		SBN Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng [illegible]		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports		Danish Open 2006		Davis Cup 2005 Day 3 Match 2						Davis Cup '05 Highlights		NBA Game Clippers @ Rockets					Sportsdesk	IBF German Open Women's Singles Finals	
Sports Plus			Golf Today	Big Bet Celebrity Poker Challenge				World Game		Nopi Tunervision 3	FIFA Preview Series 5	Ultimate Fighting Championship				Gillette World Cup Preview 4	World Poker Tour 2		
Star Movies			Species (3:45 PM)				10 Things I Hate About You			City Slickers (7:05 PM)				The Haunted Mansion			Species 2		
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Charmed		The O.C.		North Shore		Seinfeld	Charmed
Studio 23	Bewitched	Angelic Layer				[illegible]	Monkey Typhoon	[illegible]	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville (8:20 PM)	Point Pleasant (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

[illegible] SCHEDULES [illegible] BJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Malaysian activists launch campaign vs Filipino, Indon illegals in Sabah

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA — Hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants, mainly from Indonesia and the Philippines, have allegedly obtained fraudulent documents that enable them to work, buy land and vote in elections in a timber-rich Malaysian state, activists said on Monday.

A coalition of public groups has launched a campaign to collect 200,000 signatures from citizens in Malaysia's Sabah state on Borneo island who want the government to flush out illegal immigrants, said Patrick Sindu, president of the Consumers Association of Sabah.

"People in Sabah are worried because we have been flooded by illegal immigrants," he said. "There is a population boom of illegal immigrants that affects our sovereignty and security."

According to official statistics, Sabah has one of Malaysia's fastest-growing populations, largely due to foreign immigration from neighboring Indonesia and the Philippines.

The number of residents in Sabah increased from an estimated 1.7 million people in 1991 to 2.9 million in 2004, which included at least 723,000 registered immigrants. Police say there are also currently an additional 100,000 illegal immigrants in Sabah.

However, activists believe that hundreds of thousands of other immigrants who entered Sabah illegally over the past two decades have bribed authorities to provide them with bogus identification cards that classify them as Malaysian citizens, Sindu said.

Such cards allow the migrants – most of whom are believed to be originally from Indonesia, the Philippines, India and Pakistan – to seek permanent employment, purchase land and houses and even cast ballots in state and national elections, Sindu said.

"We hope our signature campaign will encourage the government to begin an initiative to verify the identity cards of everyone in Sabah to weed out the illegal immigrants," Sindu said. "The problem has been ignored for too long, and it will be more difficult if we wait longer."

Sabah, which has large timber and agricultural resources, shares a long, porous border with Indonesia's Kalimantan province in Borneo. The state is also a short distance by boat from the southern Philippines, which has been plagued for years by Muslim separatist violence.

Many immigrants come to Sabah and other parts of Malaysia, one of Southeast Asia's wealthiest nations, seeking employment in plantations, construction sites, factories and other industries to escape poverty or instability in their home countries. *AP*

Marcoses should disclose wealth first, says Pimentel

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD demand that the Marcoses disclose the extent of their family fortune before the two enter a compromise agreement, according to Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Q. Pimentel Jr.

Pimentel said yesterday it would be unwise for the government to forge an out-of-court settlement with the family of the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos if they "refuse to reveal the value of the assets that are under their possession and control."

"I find nothing wrong with the government's efforts to work out a compromise deal with the Marcoses but I think it would only be fair if the totality of the wealth of the late strongman is first determined," Pimentel said in a statement.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) said it was open to a compromise with the Marcoses to hasten the recovery of ill-gotten wealth that the family allegedly amassed during the Marcos dictatorship.

The PCGG noted the "inordinately long time" it was taking the courts to resolve the ill-gotten wealth cases against the Marcoses.

Pimentel rejected a reported plan of the PCGG to allow the Marcoses to keep 30 percent of the plundered wealth because it would be "too big and can by no means be justified considering the length of time the Marcoses and their cronies had enjoyed the perks that money could buy."

He suggested that the Marcos family be allowed to retain "only 10 percent of the money."

RP militants join worldwide protest against Iraq war

ABOUT 100 PROtesters marched on the US Embassy in the Philippine capital Monday to demand Washington pull out troops from Iraq, joining demonstrators worldwide in marking the war's third anniversary.

Members of a left-wing coalition called Iraq Solidarity Campaign carried placards saying, "End the US occupation of Iraq" – the same message delivered by hundreds of thousands of peace activists who took to the streets of Asia, Europe and the United States over the weekend.

Some solemn, others noisy, many of the protests drew smaller-than-anticipated crowds – far short of the millions who protested the Iraq invasion in March 2003 and the anniversary in 2004.

"Together with the thousands of people who rallied in Sydney, Istanbul, London and the US, we are, on the third anniversary of occupation, calling for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and the giving of real independence, sovereignty and democracy to the Iraqi people," said Herbert Docena, a protester in Manila.

Anti-war protests on Sunday included a 1,000-strong rally in Seoul, where demonstrators urged the South Korean government to bring their troops home.

In Malaysia's largest city, Kuala Lumpur, about 600 people protested peacefully, unlike a gathering last year when police used a water cannon to disperse demonstrators. In Tokyo, about 800 demonstrators took to the streets, after some 2,000 protested the day earlier. *AP*

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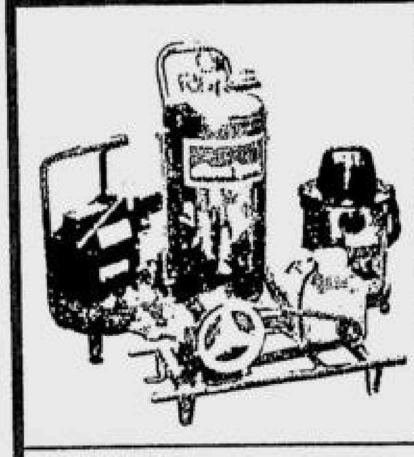

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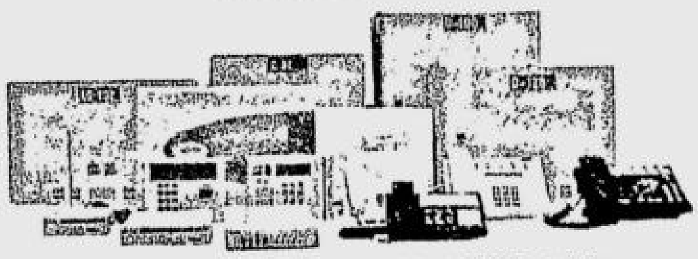

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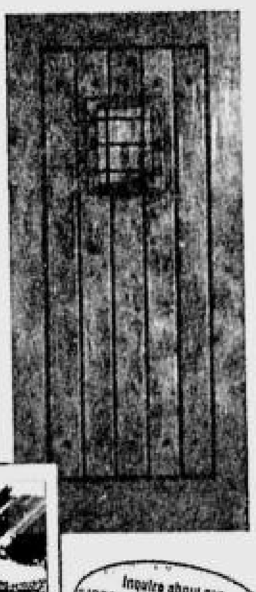

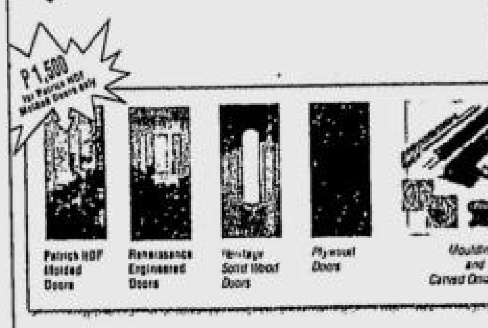

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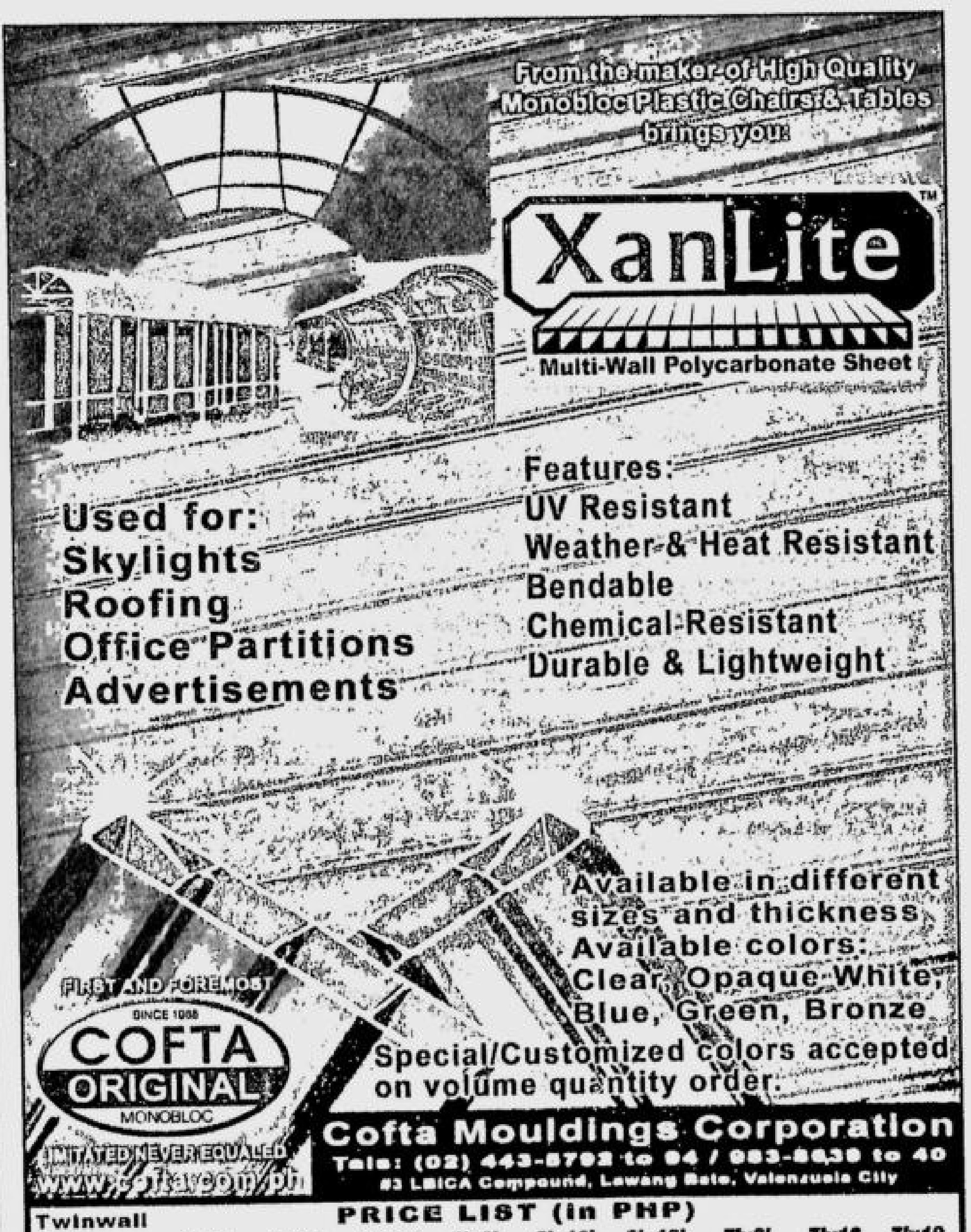

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4.0mm	865	1,735	2,055	650	1,305	1,535	1,520	3,035	3,600
6.0mm	1,415	2,825	3,355	1,060	2,120	2,514	2,475	4,945	5,865
8.0mm	1,630	3,255	3,865	1,225	2,445	2,895	2,845	5,690	6,750
10.0mm	1,845	3,685	4,375	1,380	2,760	3,280	3,225	6,450	7,660
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OPINION

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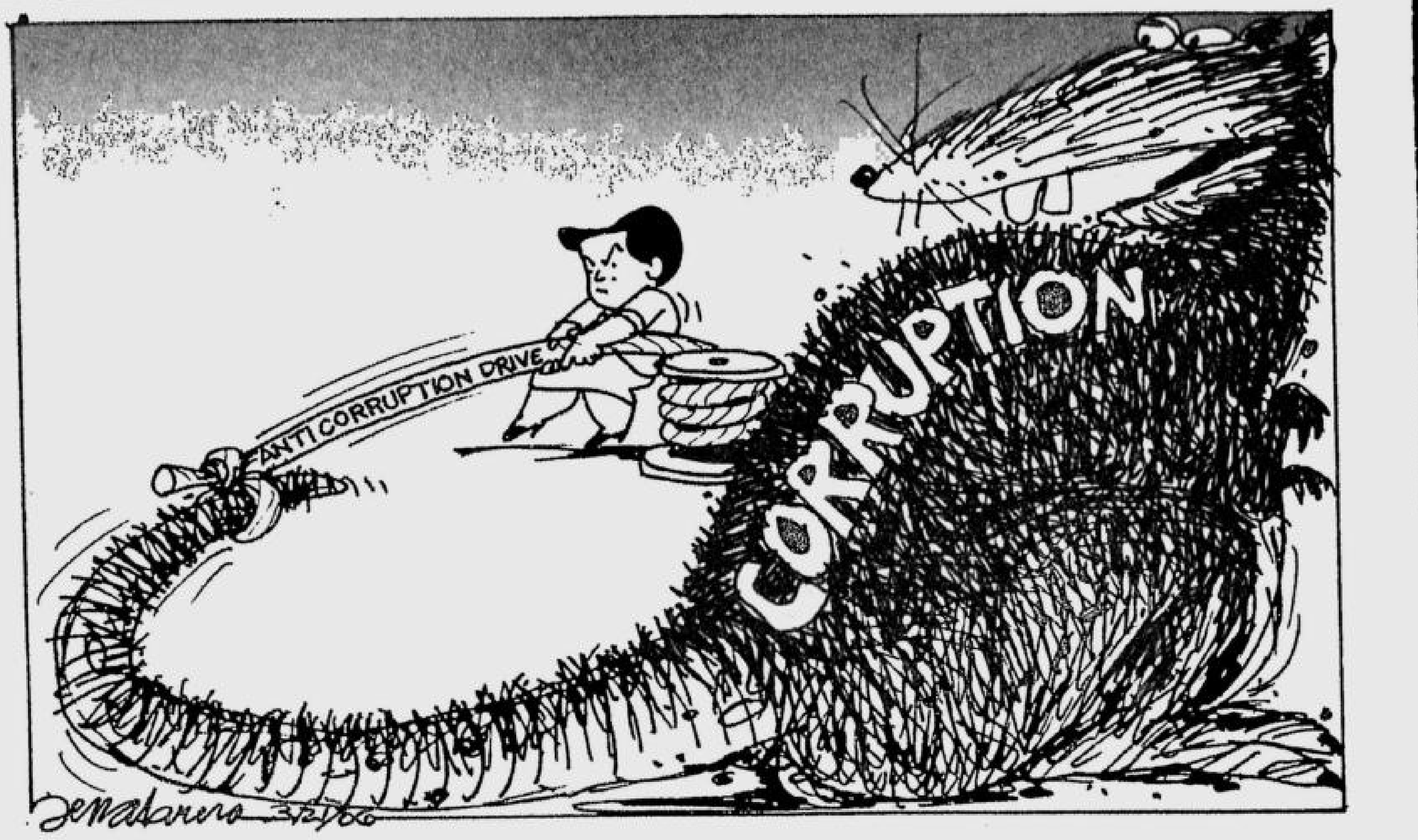


When evil is good

EDITORIAL

WAR IS PEACE. IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH. Freedom is Slavery.

These are the three main slogans of the Party in the novel "1984" by George Orwell. The slogans are in Newspeak, a bureaucratic jargon that aims to reduce the vocabulary to as few words as possible so that ultimately there will be no tools for thinking outside the state-provided concepts. The new language reverses "normal" meanings and concepts, so that "good" becomes "evil," and "evil," "good."

From childhood, people in the Oceania of "1984" are brainwashed and constantly watched by "telescreens" and the Thought Police. The Ministry of Truth, where the main character Winston Smith works, is engaged in the daily rewriting of history. He corrects "errors" in past articles to make the Party appear infallible. A person commits a "thoughtcrime" by merely thinking of an act that is deemed punishable by the state.

The population of Oceania consists of three parts: the Inner Party, about 1 percent of the population; the Outer Party, about 18 percent; and the Proles (the masses). At the top of political pyramid is the all-powerful, all-present, all-seeing Big Brother, the embodiment of the Party who is seen only on TV. For the majority of the population, goods are scarce and everything is ugly. There is "power and corruption" at high levels, but because of the suppression of freedom of the press, nobody knows about it.

"1984" is a chilling portrayal of a totalitarian society. It was meant to be prophetic, and it came true in Stalin's Soviet Union, Hitler's Nazi Germany, Mao's China and Kim Il Sung's North Korea. It is happening in other countries now.

Some aspects of "1984" are taking place in the Philippines today. For instance, Newspeak or "doublespeak": Only recently, police said they did not arrest Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel who was leading a rally on International Women's Day. They said they merely had her "taken out of danger." Danger from what or whom? Her own colleagues?

At rallies, police are following the rule of "calibrated preemptive response." What this means is that at some point during a rally, they can wield water cannon, batons and other weapons, and if necessary, bash the protesters' heads in to put the fear of the state into their hearts. CPR originally meant cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, and it was meant to revive a person who was in danger of dying. Now, CPR is being used to kill civil rights and repress people.

Last Friday former Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman and some of her friends, dressed in black T-shirts with the words *"Patalsikin na.* Now *na"* were about to cross Roxas Boulevard to enjoy a stroll on the Baywalk when they were arrested by the police. Their crime: The police thought they were going to hold a lightning rally, "a political activity prohibited by law." It was a "thoughtcrime"—they were just thinking of what they were going to do, and the police had already read their thoughts and arrested them for these supposedly "criminal" thoughts.

Four generals who were accused of involvement in cheating in the 2004 election had not been cleared of the charges and yet they were given key commands in the military. Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who is accused of 199 human rights violations in Mindoro, was awarded the Distinguished Service Star. An alleged *berdugo* as a hero and icon? Evil is good and good is evil?

In "1984," Doublethink is a manipulation of the mind; it makes people accept contradictions and makes them think that it is only the Party that can distinguish between what is right and wrong. When you listen to the pronouncements of the President, her spokespersons and political lieutenants, don't you get the uneasy feeling that you are being subjected to Doublethink? You are told that everything is fine and dandy, when in fact you know that it is not. Newspeak is nothing but the contemporary "spin" being given to stories to portray the administration in a positive, favorable light.

Many critics believe that in Orwell's generation, no other novel than "1984" stimulated so much loathing for tyranny and so much desire for freedom. In our present stage of political instability and turmoil, when there is undeclared martial law and a creeping movement toward authoritarianism, it would be well for the people to keep the lessons of "1984" in mind and strongly resist the totalitarian actions and rules of the administration. If we remain too long in a state of apathy and inaction, we may wake up too late, when we have already lost our freedom.

Daily 'snap elections'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THIS COUNTRY HOLDS A "SNAP ELECTION" every day. Some 2,557 men and women voted with their feet daily last year to search for better futures abroad.

There were 36,035 who left in 1975. That trickle is now a flood. Departures last year topped 933,035—and the number is still rising. If the *tago ng tago* (illegals) are tacked on, about 10 million Filipinos work abroad today.

"This is not a stimulative leeching of talent," says the Economist, in a world where 200 million are migrants. "It's a hemorrhage."

A thin reverse flow of the "best and brightest" migrants, however, is starting. Highly educated Poles, Lithuanians and Albanians are returning to native sod. The emergence of India's cyberspace industries and a more open Chinese economy are drawing talents back, reports The Washington Post's S. Mitra Kalita.

But *balikbayans* won't bang on our doors soon. There are few jobs here. Bad governance spurs the rush for visas. Despite widespread pessimism, "59 percent do not believe the Philippines is a hopeless case," reports a new Pulse Asia survey. "However, nearly a third (30 percent) continue to express a desire to migrate to another country."

More significant are earlier findings on what Jose Rizal called *"esperanza de nuestra patria"*: 47 percent of kids, aged 10 to 12, hoped to work abroad. Six out of 10 children of OFWs said they'd do as mom or pop did. "In the last 30 years, a 'culture of migration' has emerged," Maruja M.B. Asis of Scalabrini Migration Center writes. Better risk danger abroad than starve at home, many feel. Today, "the Philippines is the fifth-largest recipient of remittance flows after India, China, Mexico and France."

Migrants sent more than $167 billion, twice the level of international aid, to their families in impoverished nations last year, says the World Bank 2006 report, "Economic Implications of Remittances and Migration."

If funds sent via informal channels were added, remittances worldwide exceeded $232 billion. "Remittances (are) the largest source of external capital in many developing countries," the World Bank notes. They're "an important way out of extreme poverty for many…"

In 1975, OFW *padala* for families barely reached $1 million, the Scalabrini study shows. Last year, this ballooned to $8.56 billion. And that's just the official tally.

For OFW families, the monthly packets are spent on food, housing, a TV, cell phone—and tuition to prepare others for jobs abroad. A few start small businesses. But there's been little long-range impact on development.

"Walk through a rural village and you can tell, by the quality of the house, whether someone in that family worked abroad," notes the book, "The Filipina OFW: Global Woman." "Filipinas have become to American hospitals what Dominicans are to major league baseball and Koreans to inner-city grocery stores."

But critical social costs can't be measured in dollars or dinars. "The price can be high," say editors Barbara Ehrenriech and Arlie Russel. "Three out of 10 children in the Philippines have a parent who works abroad. That means 8 million kids whose mothers (most often) or fathers are thousands of miles away. A lot of First World kids' experience of the Third is a dark-skinned woman who scrubs their toilet bowl."

Internal migration is an overlooked area that San Carlos University's Office of Population Studies is looking at closely. Yet, barangays here, like those in Indonesia and Nigeria, lose many of their brightest to cities.

The better educated, who head for town, set an example, a Mexican study found. It raises the schooling of those left behind by a year. "Because they can aspire to a world beyond the village, even if they never reach it, young Mexicans stay in school for a ninth year."

"In a strange twist," Philippine success as labor exporter resulted in its failure to strengthen development processes, the Scalabrini study notes. "What has the country to show for more than three decades of overseas employment?"

Filipinos have, meanwhile, become "migration-savvy," Asis writes. They've honed the ability to adjust to roller-coaster swings of the global labor market. Foreseeing a sharp upsurge in demand for nurses, they rushed to open nursing schools. Better-pay and work conditions, offered by foreign airlines, triggered an exodus of pilots and mechanics, mostly from Philippine Airlines.

"Perceptions of the international labor market have woven their way into the educational and work aspirations of Filipinos," she adds. Word-of-mouth news, family links, plus hefty *padalas* will fuel migration in the future, coup or no coup.

Migrants make decisions based on what they think will benefit them and their families. But individual decisions have cumulative effects. They impact on the country.

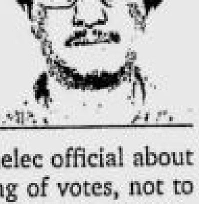
"Societal-wide concerns must be weighed vis-à-vis individual aspirations," Asis says. Needed policies range from education, managed migration, defense of abused migrants to tax breaks for OFW remittances.

"The rich world no longer welcomes the tired and the huddled," the Economist notes. "It looks set to compete ever more fiercely for the bright and the qualified."

Can a military junta handle that task?

Fingers

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

I SAW RAUL GONZALEZ ON TV SCOFFING AT Dinky Soliman et al.'s explanation that they were just taking a stroll at Baywalk while clad in black shirts. Government, he said, was not naïve. Dinky et al. were well-known political figures wearing shirts, the color of which was identified with their group, the Black and White Movement. The writing on their shirts demanded the ouster of someone, but given that Dinky et al. had been advocating the ouster of her former patron, GMA, it was clear whom they were referring to. And Dinky et al. were a group of 30 chanting slogans while they walked, which made it an illegal rally.

One is tempted to reduce this to absurdity, even if it is hard to add to Gonzalez's already abundant talents there. One can always wonder, for example, if Dinky and company would be guilty of illegal assembly if they went to a movie house and watched George Clooney's "Good Night and Good Luck" and applauded loudly the part where David Strathairn, playing the great Ed Murrow, defends journalists abandoning their neutral pretensions in a black-and-white battle between good and evil.

We know that Dinky et al. belong to a movement called Black and White. We know that the movie "Good Night and Good Luck" is in black and white. We know that GMA's witch hunt is not unlike the one Joseph McCarthy mounted in the United States, and therefore Dinky et al. must be applauding a position against GMA. Ergo, they are guilty of illegal assembly and inciting to sedition.

It is tempting to do that, but there is an even larger picture here, which is that the more Gonzalez et al. point to the sins of other people, the more they parade only their own. We have a saying that when you point a finger at another person, the rest of your fingers point right back at you. Nowhere is this truer than here.

The above is a case in point. All it shows is Gonzalez's bizarre capacity for reasoning. For let us apply his reasoning to GMA. We know that GMA has lied about not running again. We know that talking to a Comelec official about the tally during the counting of votes, not to speak of to the biggest liar of them all, is an unforgivable crime in a democracy. We know that GMA did so, her conversation being recorded on tape. We know that it is a crime that deserves a term in Muntinlupa and not another term in Malacañang. We know that fitness to hold public office is defined not by being "innocent until proven guilty" but by its exact opposite, which is being "guilty until proven innocent." That is to say, public officials may never be deemed fit to rule until they can prove to the public they can lead blameless and exemplary lives. We know the public is not naïve, a fact they have shown again and again in surveys where they say they do not believe GMA won the elections.

What is Gonzalez's conclusion? Ergo, GMA is innocent and is the rightful president.

Yet another case in point is the reward being offered for Gregorio Honasan's capture. It doesn't say "dead or alive," but that at least is what Honasan's relatives and friends fear, the bounty being an incentive for delivering him as much horizontally as vertically. I am not a great fan of Honasan, but the idea of pillorying him for sedition, as well indeed as all the others who presumably participated in the planned "withdrawal of support" by military officials, is not just insidious, it is insidiously funny. Indeed, the idea of publishing a rogues' gallery is not just unconstitutional, as Joaquin Bernas argues, it is unrestrainedly hilarious.

That is so because if Gonzalez and company persist in jailing the people who participated in, supported, or sympathized with the "withdrawal of support," they will be jailing the majority of the people of this country. I said it then: If and when a coup happened, it would be the most popular coup in the world. Unlike the coups Cory faced, it would be a coup GMA could not expect the institutions of society to stop. Unlike the coups Cory faced, it would be a coup GMA could not expect the public to stop. The reason for it being that, as the surveys bear out, the public sees GMA's presidency as a seizure of power—a coup wrought by ballots instead of bullets, a coup wrought by Garci instead of guns. The new coup would only be a counter-coup.

All the Wanted posters about Honasan and the threatened rogues' gallery will incite are counter-posters and a rogues' gallery about GMA and company. Frankly, I don't know why the usual suspects have not yet come out with posters on walls that scream: "Wanted for sedition, preferably alive to answer for her crimes: Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, alias Hello Garci, alias Hello Manny, alias Hello Kitty. Crimes include: Stealing the people's money, the people's votes, the people's dreams. Being 'a second-rate copycat of my father,' as Imee Marcos puts it, and 'a first-rate imitation of my mother,' as the text jokes added. Causing FPJ, Jaime Cardinal Sin and Raul Roco to die from aesthetic outrage. Inciting a whole nation to sedition by existing."

I leave the rogues' gallery and their individual characterizations to the readers. My own candidates for it are, apart from GMA herself: Jose Pidal, alias the First Get-it-all; Jose de Venecia, alias The Shape Shifter; Fidel Ramos, alias the Would-Be-Comeback Kid; Prospero Pichay, alias the Prosperous Vegetable; Lito Atienza, alias Pacman's Sidekick; and Mike Defensor, alias the Inheritor (at last Ernesto Maceda may pass on to him the mantle wrapped around his shoulders by the great Arsenio Lacson in the 1960s: "so young and so corrupt."

The title of their documentary says, "Paglaban sa Kataksilan: 1017." At least 65 percent of the population will have other suggestions on how to fight treachery.

Politicizing the military

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IN A RECENT MEETING WITH INQUIRER editors and reporters, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon advanced some thoughts that were quite disturbing. I wonder if he would have uttered them 17 years ago, when he led government forces against the bloodiest coup attempt in the country's history.

Biazon was quoted as saying that because of abuses allegedly committed by President Macapagal-Arroyo under Proclamation 1017, soldiers "ought to be reminded that anyone who violates the Constitution is your enemy." But he should be reminded that there are institutions in charge of determining such violations, such as the Supreme Court. In fact, a number of complaints have been lodged before it concerning PP 1017. It is not the soldiers' job to determinate who violates the Constitution and who doesn't. His interview doubtless gave many citizens the feeling that he was not so subtly inciting the military to take up arms. Perhaps Biazon was confident that he'd be called to head a military junta; after all, when he winds up his second term as senator, he would be jobless. But it's such irresponsible pronouncements of politicians that precisely politicize the military.

* * *

In the wake of PP 1017, countless opinions have been offered. Among the more interesting were those of UE Law dean and former Government Corporate Counsel Amado D. Valdez. In a piece titled "Senate is no bark and no bite," he opined that Congress "slept on its job" during the recent state of emergency. Despite its readiness to conduct investigations in aid of legislation, he said, it failed to exercise its inherent power as "the tribune of the people." He argued that PP 1017 was a virtual martial law proclamation, whose text was "substantially identical" with that of Proclamation 1081, including the common use of the word "decrees" and similar manner of implementation. He said there was no need to issue the proclamation inasmuch as military personnel involved in a coup attempt are subject to the Articles of War that allows immediate arrest or detention.

* * *

What Congress should have done was to make its own "characterization" of whether or not a state of martial law had been proclaimed, Valdez said. As representatives of the people, members of Congress are in the best position to protect their basic rights. It should not have waited for a formal declaration of martial law as it was within its power to convene in joint session to determine whether GMA's actions amounted to a de facto declaration of martial law. He opined that Congress could have declared the "non-existence" of an emergency or that PP 1017 was not warranted by the circumstances. In fact, he said, Congress' action need not be appealed to the Supreme Court since it was "an exercise of pure political power." For all the teeth the Constitution has given Congress, however, opined Valdez, "the people have yet to hear it bark and see it bite." He said that the Senate, being not bound by local constituencies, should have made the first move.

* * *

Recently I cited the disclosure of MP Chung Eui-yong of the Korean National Assembly, chair of the ruling Uri Party's foreign relations committee, that South Korea has maintained a unicameral legislature all these years, except for one year when it experimented with a bicameral set-up. Chung said the two-chamber set-up proved too slow and laborious to meet South Korea's national goal of creating a tiger economy. It's easy to see that had it maintained two chambers, the country would not have attained its current status as the world's 11th largest economy.

* * *

Here our two-chamber set-up has crippled our economy. More than 1,000 bills transmitted by the House slumbered in the Senate in the last Congress, 60 of them of national importance. In the current Congress, among the 49 national bills pending in the Senate are those dealing with smuggling, the creation of a Department of Housing and the One Billion Trees Act, all of which would have a powerful impact on the economy. We need only one chamber to pass all the laws crucial to moving the country forward. The Senate has become one big investigating and debating club (nearly P2 billion a year to maintain it), and has seemingly forgotten its principal job, which is to legislate.

* * *

On the One Billion Trees Act, authored principally by Speaker Jose de Venecia, Rep. Leovigildo Banaag told me that the House committee on natural resources, of which he is chair, forwarded the bill to the Senate in April of 2005 for concurrence. Ramon Navea III, secretary of the Senate committee on environment and natural resources, wrote to say that among the bills heard after the landslides in Aurora and Quezon was the counterpart bill authored by Sen. Sergio Osmeña III. He reported that several Senate bills on the environment, including the Billion Trees Act, are being consolidated into a substitute bill on sustainable forest management. The committee, chaired by Sen. Pia Cayetano, also heard bills on urban greening, protected areas, management of hazardous wastes and marine pollution. A total of 26 local bills have been received from the House, 19 of them on the conversion of forestlands into alienable and disposable lands, and that the committee is "thoroughly reviewing" them, he said.

The Senate should move faster.

* * *

Timed for Women's Month, the UP chapter of the Phi Kappa Phi honor society and Phi Kappa Phi Philippines Foundation Inc. will jointly sponsor today from 9 to 11:30 a.m. a forum on "Women and Charter Change" at the Alumni Hostel, Benitez Hall in UP Diliman. Six members of the Constitutional Commission—Joji Ilagan-Bian, Nelia T. Gonzalez, Rita Linda Jimeno, Emily Marohombsar, Carmen Pedrosa and Betty Lourdes Tabanda—will share their views on constitutional change.

More on the 'Baywalkers'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"WE THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE A WALK IN the park," writes Enteng Romano in his blog account of the aborted stroll he and others tried to take along Manila's Baywalk last Friday. The group stroll was stymied when Romano, along with former Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, was arrested by Manila police for violating what Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez would later say were "three laws," including one on illegal assembly.

As Romano tells it, as soon as their group of 22 people plus a 3-year-old child stepped out of Aristocrat Restaurant, "a group of about 50 policemen blocked us, demanding that we present a rally permit before they (would) allow us to cross Roxas Boulvard toward Baywalk." The Black-and-White Movement stalwarts tried to argue that they had brought no placards or streamers, and had no sound system with them, not even a bullhorn. But the police insisted that the presence of media people was "proof" of a planned protest action, objecting, too, at the black T-shirts that some of them were wearing on which was emblazoned the slogan: *"Patalsikin na. Now na!"*

"When GMA decided to take a Sunday stroll at Baywalk with her daughter and grandchild to project an image of stability, there was media (presence) too," Romano points out. "And there were about 25 of them as well, if you count all of their security people. Did they get a permit for that walk?"

And as he points out, "we have no control over what media decide to cover."

* * *

AUTHORITIES now say the provocative slogan on Dinky's and Enteng's T-shirts was meant to send a "political" message. "Do they find the slogan '*Patalsikin na.* Now *na!*' seditious? If they do, I suggest they ban Nike (T-shirts) too. Their slogan 'Just do it!' when directed to the disaffected within the military is more seditious," says Romano, tongue firmly in cheek.

Arrested for "illegal assembly," Dinky and Enteng were brought to Manila Police headquarters along UN Avenue, where they were joined by the other "Baywalkers" and even more friends who had heard about their arrest. It took authorities more than three hours to prepare the affidavit of arrest, with Romano speculating that "either they were waiting for instructions from higher authority on how to 'handle' the situation, or they were maliciously delaying the process so that the office of the inquest fiscal would be closed by the time the affidavit was ready ... giving them reason to detain us over the weekend."

At the fiscal's office for inquest, Romano says he could sense that the fiscal found no basis for the charges though she ended up recommending that Dinky and Enteng be held "for further investigation." But after hearing their lawyers' arguments, the fiscal decided to release them, pending filing of formal charges.

* * *

"I AM convinced that, aside from the capable skills of our lawyers, what kept us from spending time in jail over the weekend was the presence of friends who staked out at the police headquarters and at the City Hall and, of course, the presence of President Cory Aquino. She was with us the whole time. She did not need to call anyone or to say anything. Her mere presence exerted moral suasion on people to do what is right, or at least to desist from doing wrong," Romano testifies.

The "Black Friday" gatherings, if we still need reminding, were meant to offer an "alternative" means of expressing political sentiments for people leery—or just sick and tired—of the usual forms of protest. The activities—gatherings at Starbucks, a group trip on the MRT and this tripped-up stroll along the Baywalk—bring to mind the creative and fun-filled expressions of dissent that made the anti-dictatorship protests not just media-worthy but also so "fashionable." Perhaps this is what GMA and her advisers are really afraid of: that anti-GMA sentiment becomes so trendy that anyone who still supports her risks turning into a social pariah.

"As long as people who are convinced GMA should go remain uninvolved, the abuse of our civil liberties will continue to escalate," Romano warns. "It is our silence that emboldens them to raise the bar of oppression a notch higher."

He says that some of them were planning to watch the movie "V for Vendetta" after the stroll on Baywalk. Interesting. A memorable line in that movie, after all, goes like this: "People should not be afraid of their government. The government should be afraid of the people."

* * *

CONGRATULATIONS to my sisters in Lihok Pilipina, which was awarded the "Most Outstanding Institution" at the Third Triennial Awards of the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, which confers recognition on "unsung heroes" in the Visayas and Mindanao who "set an example of lives dedicated to help and serve others."

Mayor Ramon Piang Sr. of Upi, Maguindanao, was also awarded as the "Most Exemplary Individual" for setting up a model of good governance in Mindanao and for his work as a peace advocate among Upi's culturally pluralistic community.

The Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Awards are given in two categories: the Ramon Aboitiz Award for exemplary individual and the Eduardo Aboitiz Award for outstanding institution.

Originally a project of Pilipina-Cebu, Lihok Pilipina at first engaged in poverty alleviation through a micro-credit program for women in the 1990s. But it broadened the reach of its programs to address issues of violence against women through "Bantay Banay," a community-based approach which organizes the women in poor communities and trains them ways to help survivors of violence through para-legal assistance, emergency medical aid, shelter and counseling; as well as to prevent all forms of VAW through education and public awareness. "Bantay Banay" has since expanded into a national network of advocates against VAW.

Is ignorance bliss?

WORLD VIEW

Frank Keil

THE AGE OF THE RENAISSANCE MAB IS LONG gone. No one thinks it is possible anymore for an individual to grasp, fully, all areas of science and technology. Popular software contains millions of lines of code. Mechanisms of the immune response for just one kind of lymphocyte take up thousands of pages of scholarly journals. An iPod's elegantly simple appearance masks underlying technology that is understood by only a tiny percentage of its users.

But, despite the vast incompleteness of our knowledge, recent research suggests that most people think that they know far more than they actually do. We freely admit to not knowing everything about how a helicopter flies or a printing press prints, but we are not nearly modest enough about our ignorance.

The easiest way to show this is to have people to rate the completeness of their knowledge on a seven-point scale. For any question, a "7" denotes the equivalent of a perfectly detailed mental blueprint, and a "1" implies almost no sense of a particular mechanism at all, just a vague image. People happily, and reliably, assign numbers to their understandings of everything from complex machines to biological systems to natural phenomena such as the tides; but these ratings are usually far higher than their actual knowledge.

We can measure the discrepancy between what we think we know and what we actually know by simply asking people, after they have given their initial ratings, to tell us how some things work in as much detail as they can and then to rate their knowledge again in light of their attempt to explain.

Similarly, we can ask them to answer critical diagnostic questions (for example, "How does a helicopter go from hovering in place to flying forward?") Or we can simply provide them with a concise but meaty expert explanation. In all of these cases, people somewhat sheepishly confess that their level of understanding was far worse than they originally thought.

People are often surprised and dismayed at their ignorance, but we are not generally bad at estimating how much we know. Instead, we have a special deficit with regard to our explanatory understandings. We are good at estimating how well we know simple facts (such as the capitals of countries), procedures (such as how to make an international phone call), and narratives (such as the plots of well-known movies). But we seem to have a specific "illusion of explanatory depth," the belief that we possess a more profound causal understanding than we really do. We can be appropriately modest about our knowledge of other things, but not so about our ability to explain the workings of the world.

Several factors converge to create this illusion of knowledge. When Leon Rozenblit and I uncovered the illusion and its specificity, we ran an extensive series of studies exploring why explanatory understanding is so vulnerable to a false sense of knowing. All of the factors that we identified are less influential for facts, procedures and narratives.

One important factor underlying the illusion of explanatory depth arises from the richly hierarchical nature of most complex systems, which means that they can be understood at several levels of analysis. One can understand how a computer "works" in terms of the high-level functions of the mouse, the hard drive and the display while not having any understanding of the mechanisms that enable a cursor to move when a mouse is moved, or allow information to be stored and erased, or control pixels on a screen. This hierarchical structure of complex causal systems seduces us into a sense of understanding at a high level, which is then mistaken for having an understanding at a lower level.

A second factor is the false comfort we derive from seeing the parts of a system. The more parts you can see, the more you think you know how those parts actually work. Thus, the illusion is stronger for objects with easy-to-inspect parts than it is for objects with more invisible, inaccessible, or microscopic parts. For example, we may think that we understand the mind much better than we do when we see images of glowing brain regions.

Finally, we often figure out things on the fly when they are in front of us, but then falsely assume that we came to the object with a full understanding in our heads rather than using and manipulating the object to decipher its mechanism.

There may be a silver lining to our inflated sense of understanding. The world is, of course, far too complex for any lone person to fully grasp. If a gnawing sense of ignorance kept us diving deeper in our quest to understand everything we encountered, we might suffocate in the details in one area and miss other areas completely.

The illusion of explanatory depth may stop us at just about the right level of understanding, one that enables us to know how to get more information from others when we really need it without being overwhelmed. It would perhaps be better if we recognized the limits of our own explanatory ability, but there may be some adaptive value of those limits as well. *Project Syndicate*

Frank Keil is a professor of psychology at Yale University. His research asks how adults and children track the causal complexity of the world around them and how they work with only partial understandings of that complexity.

Coming winter

YOUNG BLOOD

Ana Christi Grageda

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I COMMUTE DAILY TO WORK. IT TAKES ME AN HOUR TO get from where I live to my small office inside the Clark Special Economic Zone at Pampanga.

Most people are surprised when I tell them this because they think that living in the province means not having to deal with traffic, but they are wrong. I think that had I worked in Manila, as I had hoped for and planned my whole life, it would take me roughly the same time to get to my office.

I ended up in the province for personal reasons and not because of lack of ability or credentials. I graduated magna cum laude honors from the University of the Philippines in Diliman and did well enough to pass the initial exams and interviews of multinational companies I applied to. But I chose to come back to my roots.

This decision baffles many members of our family and friends. Sometimes it baffles even me. But then, the heart is not always logical. I chose to come back to Pampanga because of love. Yes, of all the reasons, love.

I have been in a long-term relationship since high school. It is amazing how love can stay so strong and true over so many years if you just work hard enough on it. I have given up so much for this love and it does not bother me. I always thought that anybody can do well in academics and in their work if they just did their very best, but not everyone is cut out to be a good wife or mother—and that is what I want to achieve: greatness in the domestic front.

Marriage is not for everybody although I think everybody dreams of it. My dream is about to come true this year, or early next year at the latest. Plans are already underway for my wedding and our future home. Thinking about it makes me feel happy, excited, nervous, confused and frustrated all at the same time. I guess this is what they call pre-wedding jitters. Twenty three after all is such a young age to get married these days, so I suppose I cannot be blamed for feeling this way.

At 23, there is still so much I can do with my life. There are countless opportunities for me to succeed in my career and make a name for myself. I can choose to travel and enjoy the sights at Europe with my sister who has promised to pay for all the shopping I want to do. There are so many men out there to meet, go out with, explore and enjoy. There are still so many things that I have not experienced, that I have yet to know about, that I can do.

One day last year as I was on my way to work, I noticed many fallen leaves on the ground. They had the color of autumn in them—yellow, orange and red. They looked so beautiful against the green grass.

Autumn, I imagine, must be a very lovely season, with so many warm colors and cool winds. If I lived in a northern country, I think autumn would be my favorite season because it signals the approach of winter. It is a transitional phase, where either-or and neither-nor are both present.

Winter must be magical, with all the snow flakes, fresh pine Christmas trees and bonfires. I think most people living in tropical countries dream of winter because the experience must be very different from what we have. Snow boarding, skiing, skating—there's a multitude of activities we can do. And then there's eggnog, Frosty the Snowman and making angels on the snow. There's also the cute winter fashion of high boots and matching wool plaid mini-skirts and scarves.

Winter, however, must be a different story from the eyes of people living in four-season countries. Snow storms, sluggish roads, blistering cold are but some of the perils of winter, and they experience these every year while waiting and hoping for spring. For them, it is a condition they have to live with every year, with no choice but to deal with it as best as they can.

I am now experiencing my autumn. My dreams are now beginning to come true, with plans of a wedding and a house in the making giving me that warm feeling of contentment. I am in an interim period of engagement, where I am neither single nor married, when I am both happy and content but nervous and apprehensive at the same time. It makes me think of the coming winter of my life, the end of my single life at age 23.

I can no longer afford to be self-centered because I will soon be attending to my own family. I can no longer choose to do what is always best for me because it might not be what is best for my husband and our family. Then I will never know what it's like to meet other people and discover the world through my own eyes.

Still I wait with eager anticipation for my winter, just as those burdened by having to plow snow off their driveways do, because although winter brings with it ice and cold, it is also the most joyous season of all if only because it was during this season when the Christ child was born and New Year comes.

My winter will still be warm, I think. Raising children, decorating our house, cooking meals, loving my man and being loved.

It is a matter of perspective.

Ana Christi Grageda, 23, is an executive assistant with the Asiana Airlines, Clark Regional Sales Office.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Third dimension

"... the mentality is 'If you're not with us, you're against us.' They forget that there's a third dimension, that there is God."

—Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen, after meeting sacked Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim in the latter's house where he has been confined since the alleged plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo

Convincing closure

"Whether or not her explanation is convincing, there must be closure."

—Sen. Panfilo Lacson stressing that President Macapagal-Arroyo cannot expect the people to forget the election issue between now and 2010, when her term expires

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LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

No debate on Cha-cha

I HAVE BEEN AN avid observer of the legislative process even when I was still a college student. Being so has helped to provide me a better understanding of how legislators work, whether under a unicameral or bicameral system.

What made me squirm in my seat while reading the INQUIRER one morning was the letter of Noel Albano, deputy secretary general and chief of the Public Relations and Information Department of the House of Representatives. (PDI, 3/1/06)

It is "tragic" (to use Albano's own words) that he should be so ignorant of the parliamentary system that he should insist—along with columnist Belinda Olivares-Cunanan—that the House and the Senate should engage in a debate over Charter change. Albano should know, especially since he is a Congress official, no less than the chief information officer, that the two houses of Congress or of Parliament (in the United Kingdom) do not engage each other in debate. Yes, for the information of Albano, there are two houses in the Parliament of the United Kingdom (known as the Mother of Parliaments)—the House of Commons or Lower House and the House of Lords, or Upper House. The members of each house of Congress or Parliament debate among themselves over bills and issues. But never in the history of two-chamber parliaments or legislatures would one find that one chamber engaged the other in a debate.

Besides there is such a thing as inter-parliamentary courtesy. Each house recognizes the right of the other house to decide matters its own way. However, the members of one house may debate the members of the other house outside of Parliament or Congress, but in their private capacities and not as representatives of their respective institutions. Such a debate is actually going on almost daily in different forums—in the media, civic organizations, schools and others. There is no need to be hot under the collar over this matter which, though of great national interest, should not be taken personally under the democratic principle that every individual has a right to his own opinion; this also goes with organizations.

As for Albano's observation that popularity has nothing to do with sound legislation, of course, he is right. But in a democracy, it is the will of the majority that prevails. If the majority of the people believe that Senate President Franklin Drilon has better performance and credibility than others, as the surveys indicate, that should be given more weight than the opinion of the minority which, of course, must also be respected.

—ALFONSO B. MARQUEZ,
12-B Guijo St., Project 3, Quezon City

'Terror politics' to achieve peace

THE NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL IN Japan (NCC-J), which consists of 32 mainline Protestant churches and organizations, is gravely concerned about the rising incidence of human rights violations in the Philippines.

We are dismayed to see how the present government is eroding the people's confidence in the rule of law, justice and democracy. Proclamation 1017, which declared a state of national emergency, strongly resembled Proclamation 1081 issued by Ferdinand Marcos 35 years ago. Proclamation 1017, thus, violated the Constitution as the violent dispersals and arrest of street protesters, threats to take over media and the oppression of journalists, continued arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial executions, and the reintroduction of foreign armed forces do. The government continues with these violations despite protests from around the world.

In order to grow the economy, restore the people's confidence in the government and their faith in the future of the Philippines, justice must first be meted out for the victims of human rights violations and their families. Peace and order cannot be achieved by "terror politics." President Macapagal-Arroyo should show the world how the head of state of a democratic country should behave.

—REV. HIDETOSHI D. WATANABE, chair-Philippine Committee; REV. TOSHIMASA YAMAMOTO, general secretary, National Christian Council in Japan,
www.jca.apc.org/ncc-j/ or mano@jca.apc.org

Why the public apathy

CONRADO DE QUIROS, IN A COLUMN (PDI, 3/1/06), wondered aloud why we have lost the balls to go against dictatorship.

The answer is simple: We toppled a dictatorship before and had a chance to make real democracy work but failed in the latter.

For the majority who are poor, life under the dictatorship and whatever came after Edsa I made no difference. That news about "every day is state of emergency for the poor" explains why.

—ADRIAN I. QUINONEZ,
Adrian_quinonez@yahoo.com

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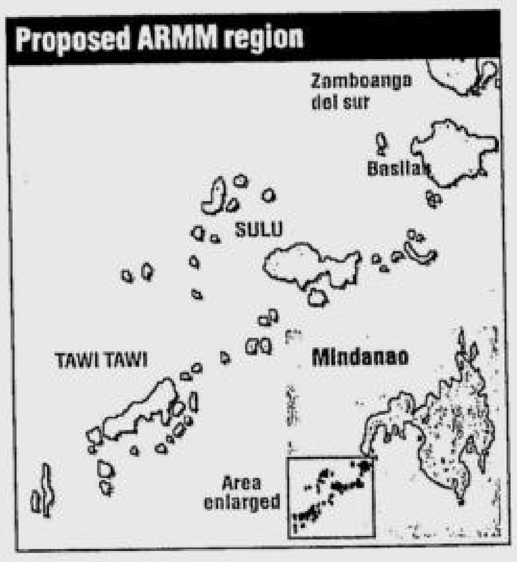
House move to split ARMM denounced

Proposed ARMM region



COTABATO CITY—A HOUSE PROPOSAL TO DIVIDE THE Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) into two areas has sparked opposition from regional leaders who described the move as divisive and made without public consultation.

"We are against it for two reasons. First, there was no public consultation about the proposal. And, secondly, the move would run counter to the Muslim-Filipino aspiration for oneness and solidarity," said ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan.

"Muslim Mindanao should be one in spirit and aspiration if we want to be strong and respectable in the eyes of the world," Ampatuan said in reaction to the proposed law introduced by Representatives Gerry Salapuddin of Basilan, Hussin Amin of Sulu, and Hermilando Mandanas of Batangas.

The House of Representatives gave emphasis to the revival of the Sultanate of Sulu in creating another region for Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan.

House Bill 5369 states: "The long history of the people of the Sulu archipelago has left an indelible mark in their culture and tradition. While they share the same religion as the Maranaos, Maguindanaoans and other Muslims in Mindanao, they are a people apart with their own tongues, customs, traditions and ways of thinking (like their Christians counterpart)."

"We were caught by surprise when he heard about that proposal in Congress," Ampatuan said. The proposed measure was filed in the House of Representatives on March 15.

"With due respect, even the OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) should be consulted about it," the governor said.

Member-states of the influential OIC have been in the forefront of helping the Philippine government establish an autonomous government for Filipino Muslims since the time of dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the 1970s.

From the defunct Regional Autonomous Government (RAG) of Western and Central Mindanao, it has evolved to what is now known as the ARMM.

The proponents of the bill said a plebiscite would be held three to four months from its approval in the House.

Ampatuan explained that although his administration was against the division of the ARMM, the "ultimate judge will still be the people."

"A divided Muslim Mindanao will defeat the purpose of unity in diversity among Filipino Muslims," he added.

If the proposal is approved, the other ARMM will constitute only Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Marawi City.

The old RAG setup was larger in scope as it covered Western and Central Mindanao.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

Cavite cop's wife, daughter slain

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—An intelligence agent of the Cavite police narrowly escaped an ambush, but his 5-month pregnant wife and 10-year-old daughter were killed in Maragondon, Cavite on Sunday night, police said on Monday. A still unidentified suspect was also killed in the attack. Senior Insp. Larry Malaybalay, Maragondon police chief, identified the slain victims as Maria Wilma Baquiran and her daughter Wendy Faye, of Barangay Ibayo Estacion 1, Naic town. Wounded was PO3 Ferdinand Baquiran, assigned to the intelligence division of the Maragondon police. He suffered a bullet wound in the armpit. Malaybalay said the victims were on their way home in the policeman's jeep when four heavily armed men waylaid them as they approached a bridge in Barangay Pantihan Uno at about 8:20 p.m.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

3 drown in river

PEÑABLANCA, Cagayan—Three people drowned while crossing the Pinacanauan River here last week. Police said Alfredo Garcia and Vicia Rumbaua crossed the river on March 13 to go to Barangay Quibal. Reports said Garcia and Rumbaua, who were about to be married, decided to move on, probably thinking that the water was only knee-deep. Strong rains in the area, however, raised the water level to more than five feet and created a strong current that swept the two. Rumbaua's body was recovered on March 16 while Garcia's was found on March 17. Police also said Junior Maggay, a farmer, drowned on March 17 when he was swept by the strong current while crossing the river.

Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

NFA launches fortified rice

COTABATO CITY—The National Food Authority in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (NFA-ARMM) has launched nutrient fortified rice as part of efforts to curb malnutrition in the region. Edgar Bentolan, NFA-ARMM chief, said fortifying rice with important nutrients like iron could greatly advance the government's campaign to address malnutrition in the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-tawi, and in Marawi City.

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Scholarships offered

COTABATO CITY—Dependents of soldiers who died in the line of duty will benefit from educational programs that offer full scholarships and tuition discounts following the signing of an agreement between the military, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda)-Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and other colleges here. Maj. Gen. Agustin Dema-ala, chief of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the Armed Forces of the Philippines Educational Benefit System, Tesda-ARMM, St. Benedict College, Ignatian College, Cotabato City State Polytechnic College, and Headstart College recently signed an agreement on the program, which would start this year.

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Spiritual arts for women

WOMEN, either by tradition or by choice, have taken the responsibility of caring for others. It often becomes a burden. To learn the art of caring for the self, the Brahma Kumaris Center for Spiritual Learning is holding a program titled "Spiritual Arts for Women" starting 4 p.m., on March 25-26. For details, call (02) 890-7960 (Makati) or (046)413-2128 (Tagaytay) or e-mail tagaytay@bkwsu.org

Warning vs 'jueteng'

SORSOGON CITY—An attempt to resurrect "jueteng" in Sorsogon was foiled after the newly appointed provincial police director ordered an immediate crackdown on operators of the illegal numbers game. Senior Supt. Joel Regondola said old jueteng operators tried to launch guerrilla-type operations in several towns but were stopped. Reports said jueteng started on March 5 in Bulan, Castilla, Casiguran, Gubat, Pilar and Matnog towns.

Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

New Palo archbishop named

PALO, Leyte—Bishop Jose Palma of the Calbayog Diocese was named by the Vatican as the new archbishop of the Metropolitan Diocese of Palo. Palma, 56, will succeed Archbishop Pedro Dean, who, with 21 years in service, is the longest archbishop to have served the Diocese of Palo. Dean was supposed to retire last year when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 75, but he has to continue discharging the functions of the archbishop of the diocese as the Vatican has yet to name his successor. The diocese covers over 50 parishes in Leyte, Dean announced his successor last Saturday in a special meeting with some priests of the diocese inside the chapel of the Archbishop Palace here.

ARNOLD ALMACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

BEATING THE HEAT
Elementary students enjoy swimming at the Iloilo fishing port to beat the heat as the dry, hot season starts making its presence felt in Iloilo City and elsewhere.

US hospital ship with 647 men to serve in ARRM

COTABATO CITY—A US government-sponsored medical mission has been scheduled to initially serve at least three provinces of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) beginning in May.

The American project, to be carried out by the Joint United States Military Assistance Group, will involve the services of a floating hospital, housed in a US naval ship, said Maj. Ted Schjoth, Jusmag executive officer.

He said Tawi-Tawi, Sulu and Basilan will benefit from the month-long (May 20-June 18) outreach program launched to provide free medical and other health care needs of ARMM residents.

Schjoth told the INQUIRER that his group is studying the proposal of ARMM officials to have the services of the medical mission reach as far as Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur.

ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan welcomed the Americans' civic-action program in the hope that it would also reach other provinces.

"It will greatly help many, especially my indigent constituents," Ampatuan said.

Capt. Rick Morrison, of the US Navy Medical Service Corps and deputy fleet surgeon, said the "mercy hospital ship" is ran by 647 military and civilian personnel, half of whom are involved in hospitalization work like medical, surgical, dental and primary health care, including services related to optometry, ophthalmology, obstetrical and gynecology.

Morrison said the hospital personnel's other health initiatives include immunization, deworming, veterinary services and a program of awareness against the possible entry of the avian influenza.

Dr. Lampa Pandi, regional health officer in charge, said he has already alerted provincial and municipal health office chiefs to spread the good news and start listing down would-be recipients.

Pandi, who has begun distributing PhilHealth cards to parents of poor families, has urged those with ailments and others with health problems to take advantage of this rare opportunity to be accorded free medical attention by the US government.

"The hospital can treat or attend to an average of 1,000 patients each day," Schjoth said.

He said the US medical mission is part of its government's policy to providing humanitarian aid to impoverished states in the Pacific basin. *Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

General accuses NPA of crimes against ordinary people

LUCENA CITY—THE HEAD OF the military's Southern Luzon Command based here in Camp Nakar has accused the communist New People's Army operating in Southern Tagalog and Bicol of committing crimes against ordinary people.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., Cabuay said that from January to March, communist guerrillas assassinated 68 people, mostly civilians, in Southern Luzon.

"They were mostly helpless civilians—farmers and ordinary folks who resisted the extortion activities and presence of this terrorist group in their areas," Cabuay told the INQUIRER in an interview.

The Solcom chief said the guerrillas also abducted a total of 12 persons during the same period. The victims' whereabouts are still unknown, he said.

During the same period, the communist guerrillas conducted a total of eight sabotage operations on communication towers of the Ayala-owned Globe Telecommunications in different locations in Southern Tagalog and Bicol. Total damage was estimated at P11.2 million.

Military officials said the attacks were prompted by NPA demands for extortion payments or "revolutionary taxes."

The Solcom report claimed that the NPA was responsible for at least 18 arsons that destroyed heavy equipment of road construction projects and buses.

Cabuay said the group was also behind at least three robbery hold-ups and car thefts last year.

Calling the guerrillas irrelevant, President Macapagal-Arroyo last week vowed to "go for the jugular" and put an end to the rebellion. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

No bounty hunters vs wanted men, says Cordillera PNP exec

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—The Philippine National Police may have offered bounties for the arrest of the country's most wanted criminals but it will never go to the extent of hiring bounty hunters to track them down, the Cordillera police director said.

In the region alone, going after notorious criminals is hampered by the mountainous terrain and thick forests but never had the PNP thought of tapping bounty hunters, said Chief Supt. Raul Gonzales.

"We never entertained the idea of having bounty hunters in our pursuit operations against lawless elements who have prices on their heads," Gonzales told the INQUIRER on Friday.

"That would be unlawful and unthinkable for the PNP," he said.

A bounty hunter is a person who seeks out fugitives for monetary rewards.

Gonzales said bounty hunters are private citizens who do not belong to the police or military establishments.

Bounty hunting

In parts of the United States where bounty hunting is allowed to operate, the bounty hunters have more powers than the ordinary policeman, like entering the fugitive's private property even without a warrant.

Recently, the PNP decided to set bounties for suspected conspirators charged with helping the Magdalo group of soldiers take over the Oakwood Hotel in Makati City in 2003.

A P5-million bounty was set for former Sen. Gregorio Honasan and another P3 million was put up for six others who were indicted for the 2003 coup d'etat by the Department of Justice.

The cash rewards, which were approved by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, were taken from an existing allocation for incentives to government informants.

The police in the Cordillera have 18 most wanted persons in their order of battle, 15 of whom have bounties on their heads totaling P2.7 million.

P1-million award

Former Vice Mayor Corey Dickpus of Lubuagan, Kalinga, tops the list with a P1-million award for his arrest.

He said urging or inviting people to become bounty hunters would not be proper. He said the degree of notoriety and the kind of crimes committed are factors used to determine if a criminal would become part of the most wanted list.

Regional commands, he said, are responsible for recommending to the national police headquarters the names of fugitives who should be given bounties. *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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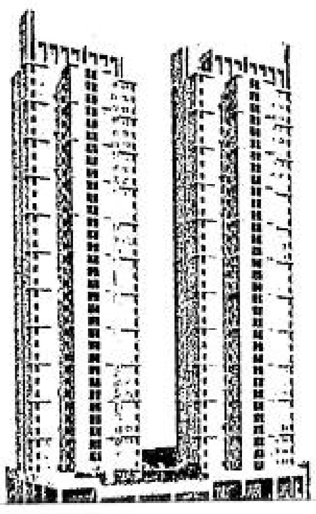
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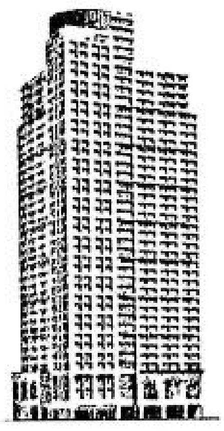
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WHAT'S INSIDE

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AFP chief Generoso Senga

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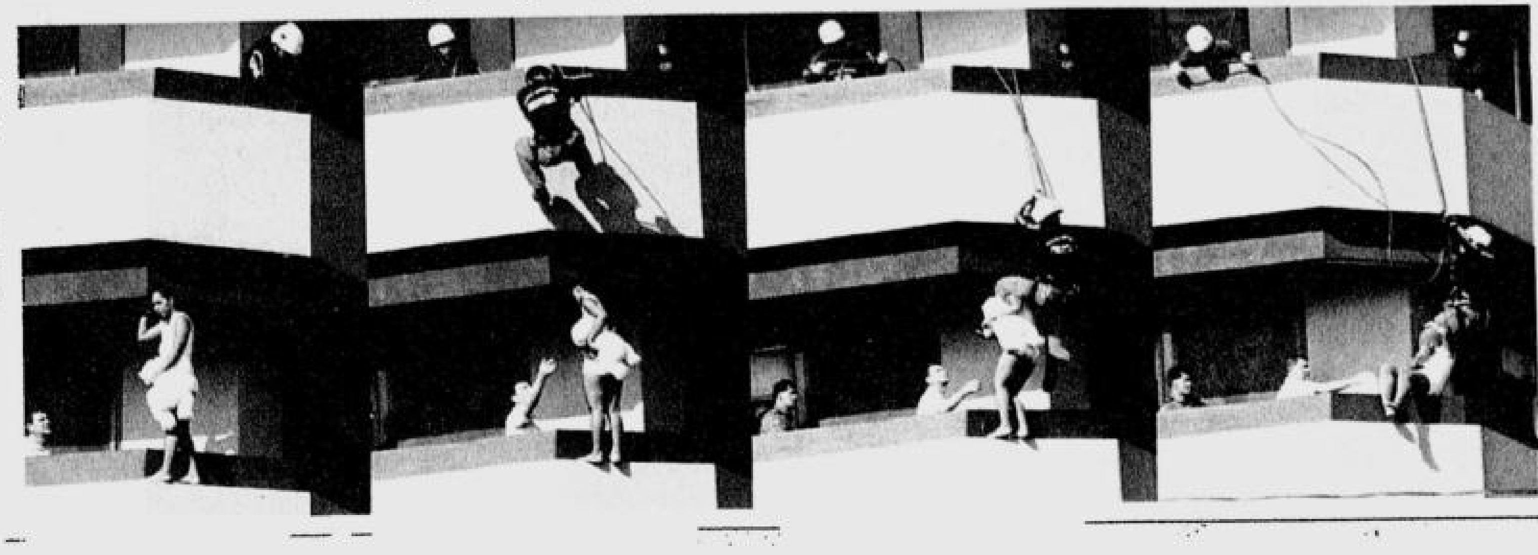

JUST IN TIME Agile men from the Bureau of Fire Protection rescued a Thai national as she tried to jump off from the fourth floor of a hotel in Manila on Sunday.

AP PHOTO

SEARCH FOR MOTIVE

Police to probe cases vs Umale

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

POLICE WILL ALSO LOOK INTO NINE cases allegedly involving assassinated businessman Leonardo Umale, which Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Chavit Singson had listed as possible motives behind the murder.

"We will also look into (those cases). We will probably contact Singson's lawyer about it," Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino told the INQUIRER.

The police, however, will also investigate why Clarissa Umale, the victim's wife, immediately tagged Singson as the mastermind behind the killing, said Alejandrino, head of Task Force Umale.

The governor, however, denied the allegation and listed nine cases he thought could have earned Umale more enemies. He even said he was "an ally and not an enemy" of Umale.

Resolved issues

Singson said some of the cases involved Umale's alleged nonpayment to some contractors and reported quarrels with some friends, a fellow businessman, a beautician, an actor and a group of informal settlers.

But Clarissa yesterday said these nine cases "were all very petty" and had been resolved years ago. "Singson is twisting these cases," she said.

Clarissa also stood by her allegation that Singson was her husband's only enemy. "I heard Singson threatening my husband when he was speaking to him through a speaker phone," Clarissa said.

"We will answer these cases he had listed one by one. We have court records," she added.

Umale was about to enter the Pearl Plaza Building on Pearl Drive in Pasig City on Thursday when four armed men shot him four times in the head. The killers also shot his building electrician, Ernesto Ganton, in the belly. Ganton died last Saturday.

Past quarrels

Alejandrino reiterated yesterday that Umale could have many enemies. "We will also look into circumstances arising from his past quarrels," he added.

"It is also possible that some people could still have ill feelings for him even after several years ," Alejandrino said.

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Prank sends Senga aide running to cops

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE NEWS SENT SHOCK WAVES TO POlicemen in Marikina City early yesterday morning: a service vehicle of the office of Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen. Generoso Senga was missing.

Together with the driver, who was in a state in a panic, policemen searched the city, only to find out, about two hours later, that the white Mitsubishi L300 van was just parked elsewhere.

In his official statement to the city police investigation office, the driver, whom police identified as T/Sgt. Glenn Mellanes, said he failed to remember where he had parked the service vehicle.

But a police official said Mellanes and two of his friends allegedly had a drinking spree before the incident. When Mellanes got drunk, his two friends got into the van and drove away, leaving him behind.

In the police's official report, Mellanes parked the vehicle in front of a mall near the Marquinton Place in Marikina at about 11 p.m. Sunday. He then got out of the car to look for a store.

Not able to find the vehicle on his return, Melleton said he went to the Marikina City Police Station, just about 300 meters away from the Marquinton Place, to report the incident at 4:45 a.m. Monday. Policemen quickly alerted other police precincts. Those who were at the station also searched the vicinity.

Two hours later, police found the vehicle parked inside the Nile Village in Barangay Sto. Nino, just less than 100 meters from Marquinton Place. The doors were not locked. The key was still in the ignition and the accessories were all intact, police added.

City police chief Senior Supt. Manuel Gaerlan, told the INQUIRER Mellanes was drunk when he reported the incident to the police.

A police official and another investigator, however, told a different story. They said Mellanes allegedly had a drinking spree with two friends, a male and a female, in a bar near Marquinton Place.

When Mellanes passed out, his friends decided to leave him in the bar. The two allegedly drove the vehicle and parked it inside the Nile Village.

Chief Supt. Errol Pan of the Traffic Management Group confirmed that Mellanes' friends just played a prank on him.

With Luige A. del Puerto

Malls could be fronts – NBI

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Leila B. Salaverria

DRUG SMUGGLERS COULD HAVE BEEN USing malls and department stores selling imported but cheap goods as fronts for their illegal activities, according to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

NBI Anti-Illegal Drugs Task Force chief Ruel Lasala yesterday said the bureau received information that drug dealers had been smuggling methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu into the country by including them in the shipment of merchandise like clothes and other dry goods. The goods are then sold at very cheap prices in malls like the 168 Shopping Mall in Binondo, Manila, Lasala said.

Operatives of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) raided the mall on Thursday to check whether or not stall owners had paid the required taxes and duties on goods sold in their stores.

"Dealers could sell the goods at very, very low prices because those are not their primary products but the drugs smuggled with the merchandise," Lasala explained.

He said operatives who raided shabu laboratories in Antipolo, Valenzuela, Parañaque and Quezon City found dry goods, kitchenware, Christmas décor, plasticware and toys, mixed with drug shipments.

Lasala added that the lack of sophisticated equipment in the detection of drugs like giant X-rays machines, which could scan the contents of an entire container van, also made it easier for drug dealers to smuggle shabu into the country.

Raids won't stop

Meanwhile, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said in a forum yesterday that the BOC should not just prosecute mall owners but also go after importers and customs personnel who could have connived to smuggle items into the country.

Acting Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales agrees. "If the 168 stall owners say they just bought the items from importers, then we will ask them to identify the importers," he said in a phone interview. Morales said earlier that he would look into the possible involvement of customs personnel in smuggling.

According to Morales, the bureau would not stop with the 168 mall raid. "The moral of this operation is simple. They should pay taxes on imported goods because that's what the law says," he said. "If we can raid the 168 mall, we can raid others."

Electric post topples, hits cruising car in QC

TRAFFIC slowed down yesterday along Commonwealth Avenue after a strong gust of wind caused an electric post to fall on a car. The driver, who did not give his name to traffic enforcers, was unhurt. Traffic in the area returned to normal hours later after the car was towed and residents pushed the post away from the road. RAFFY LERMA

By DJ Yap

A STRONG GUST OF WIND UPROOTED A tree and an electric post which fell on a car cruising along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City at noon yesterday. No one was hurt in the incident.

Described as a "mini *ipo-ipo* (tornado)" by residents, the gust of wind knocked down a Manila Electric Company post at the Commission on Audit U-turn slot, and an *ipil-ipil* tree some 10 meters away.

The tree then fell on the hood of a Toyota Camry (plate number XKZ 990) which was passing on the northbound lane.

The impact left a dent on the left side of the hood, according to PO3 Venus Ormita of Quezon City Traffic Sector 5. Witnesses said the impact was weak because the descent of the post was gradual.

The driver of the car, a man who was in his early to mid-30s, did not leave his name with investigators, and was in a hurry to leave the scene.

Traffic police called in Meralco personnel to remove the light post which blocked several lanes of the busy highway, Ormita said.

The electric wires, curiously enough, were gone when the Meralco personnel appeared on the scene, she said, adding that they were probably taken away by persons who sell the wires to junk shops.

Barangay officials, on the other hand, helped push the fallen tree away from the road, Ormita said.

DepEd to review teachers' recruitment guidelines

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Alcuin Papa

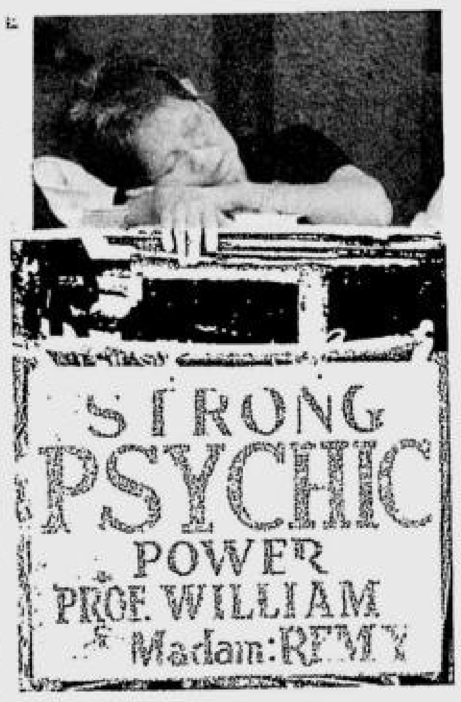
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DepEd) yesterday said it would review the guidelines for the recruitment of teachers following the death of a Grade II student whose teacher allegedly forced her to eat pencil shavings.

DepEd Officer-in charge Fe Hidalgo said in hiring new teachers, the department would give more emphasis on psychological factors, specifically behavioral reactions to certain conditions and situations. She added that as a result of the incident, the department was looking forward to continuing the implementation of the Personal Safety Lessons (PSL) curriculum in private and public elementary and high schools nationwide.

The PSL program seeks to develop awareness and positive values among the learners, parents and community toward the protection of children against sexual abuse in and out of schools.

Delmar Redota, a Grade II student at the Silangan Elementary School Main in Barangay Upper Bicutan, Taguig, died last Wednesday, a week after a teacher identified as Brenda Elbambuena forced her to eat pencil shavings. Redota developed acute tonsillitis and pneumonia and later died in the hospital.

Taguig Mayor Freddie Tinga met yesterday with the city's assistant school superintendents to prepare the filing of child abuse charges against Elbambuena. Redota's parents had said that they do not want to file charges against the teacher because they did not want their daughter's body to be autopsied.



ALL TUCKERED OUT
Strong she might advertise herself to be but Madame Remy's strong psychic powers failed to sustain her. No, she was not weary from attending to a lot of customers. She got bored from waiting for one to approach her booth in Quiapo, Manila. REM ZAMORA

LAURA VICUÑA FOUNDATION, INC.
of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians
(Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco)
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Tel. 714-7793 Fax 714-7428
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ANNOUNCEMENT

On March 30, 2006, the Laura Vicuña Foundation, Inc. will hold the ***"National Policy Conference for the Protection and Development of Child Laborers in the Sugar Industry"*** at the L'Fisher Hotel in Bacolod City. This will be participated in by sixty (60) delegates from government organizations, non-government organizations, international organizations, sugar planters, millers, lawyers and legal advocates. Partly financed by Winrock International, this conference hopes to change the course of history of the sugar industry into a just, socially-responsible, child-caring and friendly sector.

The Laura Vicuña Foundation, Inc. which was organized in 1990 to address the needs and problems of the streetchildren, sexually-abused girls, child laborers and those at high risk of exploitation and abuse is a noble partnership between the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (also known as the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco) and some distinguished lay board members: Justice Ricardo C. Puno, Sr., Ms. Corazon S. dela Paz, Mr. Jose Ma. A. Concepcion, III, Ms. Maria Victoria J. Cuisia, Mr. Francisco A. Dizon, Bishop Federico O. Escaler, S.J., Ms. Marilen N. Espiritu, Ms. Maria A. Fores and Ms. Josefina N. Tan.

In the 2005 Asia Pacific Best NGO Awards - Country Level, Laura Vicuña Foundation, Inc. came out as Country Winner, representing the Philippines at the Regional Competition. This event, participated in by seven (7) nations from the Asia Pacific Region was held in Singapore last September 9, 2005 where the Foundation bagged the 3rd place.

Martial law should not be dug up

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S ADVISers are not doing their job. If they did, they would have told her tax evaders and smugglers could not be court-martialed or tried by a military tribunal because the country is no longer under martial law.

Dictator Ferdinand Marcos had his enemies, including former Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., tried by a military tribunal during martial law.

Suspected big-time tax evaders and smugglers, like the siblings Vicky and Tomas Toh, can only be tried by the civil courts.

Unless the President is planning to impose martial rule, she was talking out of hand about using the military courts to try tax cheats and smugglers.

* * *

GMA would be giving unnecessary powers to the military by having some criminal cases tried by court martial.

As it is, the military is again having a taste of raw power that it had during Marcos' military rule.

It would be better for the President not to dig up the past.

* * *

SOME Manila policemen raided Sunday the Juan Luna Shopping Mall at Juan Luna and Meisic Streets in Binondo.

The cops used as basis the well-publicized raid on 168 Mall in Divisoria by Bureau of Customs agents and policemen from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

But the Manila cops were not authorized to conduct the raid. Wearing civilian clothes, they introduced themselves as customs agents.

They released those they arrested, mostly Filipinos and Tsinoys, after shaking them down, allegedly for P5,000 to P20,000.

I wonder if Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, Manila Police District director, knew about the shakedown?

* * *

When a guy had many enemies, the police would be hard put determining the mastermind behind his assassination.

That's the case of businessman Leonardo Umale who was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Pasig City last Thursday.

Umale's wife, Clarissa, suspects it was Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson who did it. But Singson has vehemently denied having had a hand in the killing. He said the victim had many enemies.

Among them was Rizal Gov. Casimiro Ynares with whom Umale had a quarrel over a piece of land in Pasig.

Another was a businessman whom Umale charged with car theft. The businessman had sold on installment a Mercedes Benz to Umale. When Umale was late in paying amortization, the businessman tried to get it back. That was the reason for the car theft case. Police records showed that Umale made enemies among his business associates and friends because of money matters.

Umale's case confirms the truism that male friends part ways either because of money or a woman.

* * *

Manila policemen shouldn't have arrested former Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman. That was what she wanted. She wanted publicity and that was what she got.

Had they left her alone while she strolled with other persons seeking the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo at Baywalk, things would have come to pass uneventfully.

The President's subordinates are the ones destroying her image.

METROBRIEFS

Makati cops lend a hand

LENDING a hand beyond the call of duty, Makati's 553-strong police force would be donating their salary for one day to the landslide victims in Barangay Guinsaugon, St. Bernard town in Southern Leyte. "The chief PNP (Director General Arturo Lomibao) has given word that policemen should give voluntary contributions to the victims of the Southern Leyte landslide," said Makati Police District chief Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio. Donations would be collected until the end of the month or up to mid-April, said Valerio. The money would then be coursed through the MPD's mother unit, the Southern Police District, for turnover to the PNP headquarters. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

Stabbing spree in Caloocan

A MENTALLY disabled houseboy stabbed four people, three of them children, in Caloocan City at dawn yesterday. The victims were identified as Honey Fajardo, 24; an 11-year-old girl, her 7-year-old sister and four-year-old brother. Chief Insp. Cresencio Galvez, head of the city's intelligence unit, said the suspect, Pepito Joson, 53, escaped after the incident. A relative of the children said the children's mother had asked Fajardo, a family friend, to stay with her children as she was going out. Joson, who has been with the family for nine years, reportedly tried to molest the 11-year-old girl but Fajardo stopped him. The suspect then stabbed Fajardo 11 times and turned on the children. Relatives brought the victims to the hospital. Doctors declared the children out of danger although Fajardo remained in the hospital. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Ruby anniversary

THE ARELLANO (Manila North) High School Class of 1966 will celebrate their 40th anniversary on May 6. Class members are invited to register early and join the celebration. For more information, please contact Florian Pagula-Tan at 5623919 or mobile 0915-9008207; Bert Cruz at 9613488 or 0920-5090073 or Jay B. de Belen at 8902029; 8976164 or 0927-3322975.

France PM vows protests won't force jobs plan retreat

PARIS—FRENCH PRIME MINISTER Dominique de Villepin vowed not to back down on his contested youth jobs plan, the day after violent protests and as union leaders threatened Sunday to call a general strike.

Villepin called for giving his controversial First Employment Contract (CPE) "a chance," while adding that he "regretted" it was misunderstood.

"We must give the CPE a chance. A CPE completed and improved to answer everyone's concerns," Villepin said following Saturday's protests in an interview with the youth magazine Citato, which will appear this week.

Meanwhile union and student leaders had given Villepin an ultimatum of Monday afternoon to withdraw the CPE, which on Saturday brought out hundreds of thousands of opponents to the streets of Paris and other cities in at times violent demonstrations.

The march through the French capital ended in several hours of evening confrontations between riot police and masked gangs, who hurled projectiles, set cars alight and smashed shop windows and telephone booths.

Police fired tear gas and made baton charges to disperse demonstrators at the Place de la Nation in the east of the city, and later in the Latin Quarter used water canon to break up protesters trying to pull down a metal barrier blocking access to the historic Sorbonne university.

Police said they made 167 arrests in the clashes, which were the worst since tensions over the youth jobs contract erupted two weeks ago. A total of 34 police officers and 18 demonstrators were injured, though none seriously.

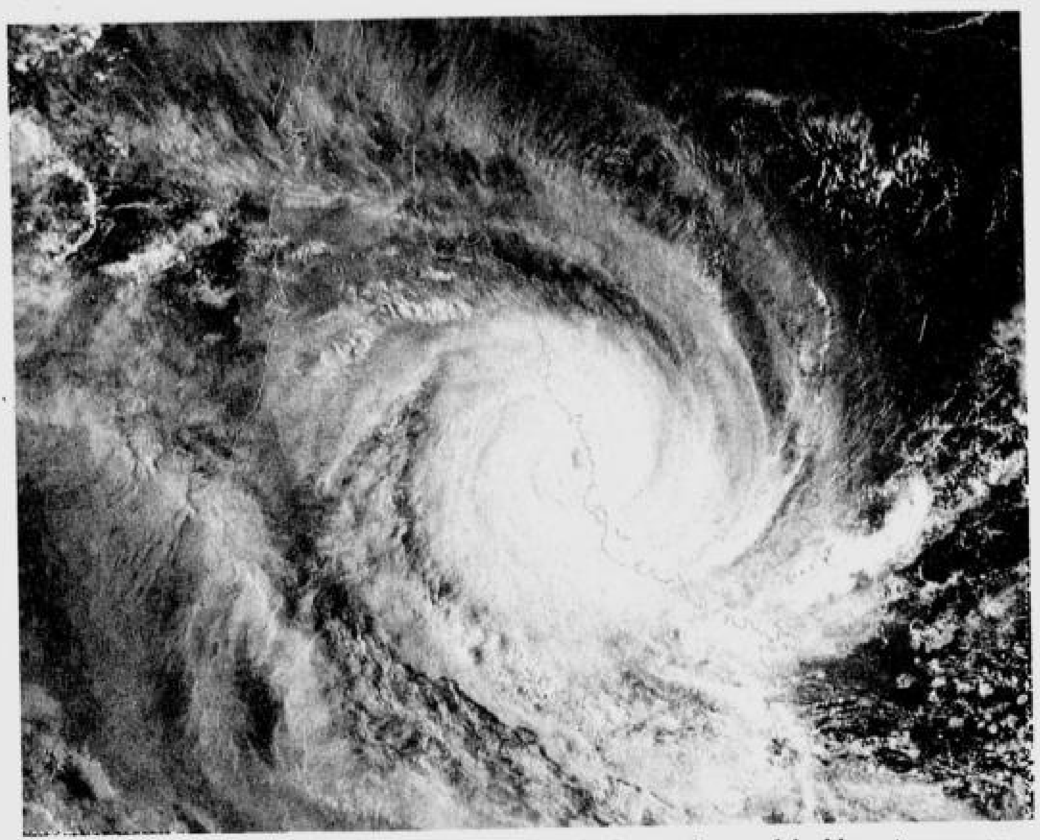
The disturbances marred a day that was hailed by unions as a major success in their campaign against the CPE, and on Sunday leaders vowed to step up the pressure in the days ahead if the youth jobs contract is not withdrawn.

Campaign organizers were to meet at 5 p.m. Monday to assess the government's response, with the threat of a fresh escalation via a general strike openly brandished.

"Obviously we have to maintain the mobilization. For it to work we need an appeal from several unions for an inter-professional strike day," Jean-Claude Mailly of Workers' Force (FO) told Le Journal du Dimanche newspaper.

Bernard Thibault, head of the powerful General Labor Confederation (CGT), said that "if nothing moves we will propose preparing a day of general work stoppages in the coming days. Conditions are such that it should be a success."

An open-ended contract for under 26-year-olds that can be terminated without justification in the first two years, the CPE is meant to bring down France's chronically high youth unemployment rate by offering employers greater flexibility. *AFP*



A SATELLITE image of Cyclone Larry which meteorologists say is one of the biggest ever seen. REUTERS

Super cyclone hits Australia

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA—A SUPER CYCLONE smashed into tropical northeastern Australia Monday, with winds of up to 290 km an hour causing casualties and ripping homes apart, officials said.

Tropical Cyclone Larry hit land near Innisfail in the far north of Queensland state as a top category five, but had since been downgraded to a category four, the Queensland weather bureau said.

It is the strongest cyclone to strike Australia in more than 30 years and was seen as potentially more dangerous than Cyclone Tracy, which devastated the northern city of Darwin in 1974, killing 71 people and leaving 20,000 homeless.

Innisfail police said they had been inundated with calls from terrified residents whose "homes are literally crumbling around them."

"We have roofs flying off in Fly Fish Point, Silkwood and in the city center," an Innisfail police spokesperson said. "And we have trees across roads."

Police had been unable to leave the station despite hundreds of calls for help, she said.

"We've had reports of some casualties at Cairns hospital, some 20 or so," weather bureau forecaster Jonty Hall said. "There's also some reports of a few people missing as well."

Queensland state Premier Peter Beattie declared a state of emergency ahead of the storm's landfall late Sunday, opening the way for mandatory evacuations in several coastal areas, where tidal surges of up to two meters were expected.

Hundreds of people evacuated coastal towns in the area and major airlines canceled all flights into Cairns and Townsville, the two biggest cities in the region.

The weather bureau describes a category five cyclone as "extremely dangerous with widespread destruction." It said Larry posed a very serious threat to life and property.

Forecaster Jonty Hall said conditions around Innisfail were "extremely dangerous."

"We're starting to see a very dangerous storm surge come to shore anywhere pretty south of Innisfail down towards Cardwell," he said. "It doesn't get much worse than this." *AFP*

A FLOCK of pelicans fish on Carthage Lake March 19 near Carman, Ill. AP

Israel confirms deadly bird flu virus found in Holy Land

JERUSALEM—ISRAEL'S AGRIculture ministry confirmed Monday the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu had spread to three locations in the Holy Land, where hundreds of thousands of turkeys and chickens were culled over the weekend.

In a statement on its website, the ministry said the flu had been found at the southern communal farms Ein Hashlosha and Holit and in Sdeh Moshe, a farming community in central Israel.

In Ein Hashlosha and Holit, vets have almost completed destroying the flocks where the flu was found, and are now beginning culling flocks in a 3-km radius of the infected area, the ministry statement said.

In Sdeh Moshe and Nachshon—a fourth area suspected of being infected—the vets will complete the culling process later Monday, the ministry said.

"At the moment, we are talking about four infected areas, meaning the situation is under control. Even if additional infected areas are found, it does not mean the flu is spreading," the ministry statement said.

The H5N1 virus has killed or forced the slaughter of tens of millions of chickens and ducks across Asia since 2003, and recently spread to Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

World health officials fear H5N1 could evolve into a virus that would easily be transmitted between people, potentially triggering a global pandemic, though there is no evidence that is happening.

About 100 people have died from the disease worldwide, most after having been directly infected by sick birds.

Israel began culling flocks of infected turkeys on Saturday, even though the virus had not been officially confirmed. Initial tests led the agriculture ministry to believe the flu had spread to the area, and the infected farming communities were immediately isolated.

Dafna Varisca, agriculture ministry spokesperson, estimated between 400,000 to 500,000 turkeys and chickens would be killed by drinking poisoned water. Israeli farms raise 200 million turkeys, chickens and other poultry annually, the ministry said.

The European Commission banned the import of Israeli poultry late last week after Israel announced the first signs of an outbreak. The ban includes live poultry, poultry meat, eggs and poultry products, but not heat-treated poultry. *AP*

5 North Koreans defect to South

SEOUL—FIVE NORTH Koreans defected to South Korea on a small fishing boat that was found adrift on the southern side of the heavily guarded nautical border, an Army spokesperson said on Sunday.

The five defectors were apparently a family of four that included a man in his 30s, identified by his surname Lee, his wife, two children and one other person close the family, the Yonhap news agency reported, quoting Army and police officials.

The Army spokesperson declined to give details about the five.

Officials are investigating the matter.

They were on a small vessel that had struck a rock and drifted for two days before being spotted by South Korean vessels off the east coast of the peninsula, Yonhap reported.

Lee told the South Korean officials he had decided to leave the impoverished North after hearing about the possibility of a better life in the South through radio broadcasts, the news agency said.

The two Koreas remain technically at war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce, not a peace treaty, and the two sides carefully patrol their coastal waters.

Defections by sea from the North are rare because potential defectors run a high risk of being spotted, and then being taken into custody or attacked by North Korean naval vessels. *Reuters*

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Circular No. 516
Series of 2006

Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 188 dated 16 February 2006, the provisions of Section 2205 and Appendix 31 of the Manual of Regulations for Banks (MORB), covering the guidelines on Check Clearing Rules for Thrift Banks authorized to accept demand deposits and for Rural Banks who are members of the Philippine Clearing House Corporation are hereby amended as follows:

A. Sec. 2205 Check Clearing Rules for Thrift Banks Authorized to Accept Demand Deposits.

1. The second sentence of Sec. 2205 c. (1) of the MORB is hereby amended to read as follows:

Every TB authorized to participate directly in the clearing operations of PCHC should apply for this line with the appropriate Supervision and Examination Department (SED) of the BSP.

2. Item e under Section 2205 is hereby added to the MORB to read as follows:

e. Any overdraft incurred under Section 102 of RA No. 7653 may be converted into an emergency loan or advance provided it complies with the guidelines governing the grant of emergency loans under Subsection X272.2 of the MORB.

B. Appendix 31 (Appendix to Items "c" and "d" of Section 2205 and 3205)

Sec 3. Application for Overnight Clearing Line

Section 3 is hereby amended to read as follows:

a. Thrift and rural banks authorized to participate directly in the clearing operations of PCHC shall file their application for an Overnight Clearing Line with the appropriate SED supported by documents indicated below under item b.1, b.2 and b.3.

b. The applicant bank shall furnish the Department of Loans and Credit (DLC) a copy of the application, together with the following:

b.1 A duly notarized secretary's certificate together with a resolution of the board of directors of the bank authorizing the bank to apply for a loan line and designating the officers authorized to negotiate, sign and execute all accessory documents for the loan line;

b.2 Duly signed and notarized Overnight Clearing Line Agreement between the bank and the BSP;

b.3 Duly accomplished Tripartite Memorandum of Agreement between and among the BSP, the applicant-bank and the PCHC;

b.4 Notarized Surety Agreement executed by the controlling stockholders (owning more than 50% of the voting stocks) and every person or group of persons whose stockholdings are sufficient to elect at least one director obligating themselves jointly and severally with the bank to pay promptly on maturity or when due the BSP, its successors or assigns, all promissory notes covering availment against the loan line; and

b.5 Collateral documents to cover the loan line.

c. The loan line shall be secured by first class collaterals that refer to the assets and securities which have relatively stable and clearly definable value and/or greater liquidity and free from lien and encumbrances, to the extent of their applicable loan values, as follows:

Acceptable Collaterals	Loan Value
c.1.a Government securities c.1.b Commercial Credits (AAA)	80% of the current market value of the securities
c.2 Unencumbered real estate properties in the name of the bank	70% of the appraised value of the land and insured improvements determined by a licensed and independent appraiser acceptable to the BSP in accordance with BSP's terms of reference.
c.3 Mortgage credits	70% of the appraised value of the property securing the loan evidenced by negotiable instruments as determined by a licensed and independent appraiser acceptable to the BSP in accordance with BSP's terms of reference or 80% the outstanding balance of such loan whichever is lower.
c.4 Holdout on foreign currency deposits with the BSP	80% of current market value

d. The DLC shall inform the appropriate SED of the total loan value of eligible collaterals and the appropriate SED, upon finding the application and any amendments thereto to be in order, shall recommend to the Monetary Board the approval of the bank's loan line.

e. The loan line, once approved, can be amended at the instance of the applicant bank only once every twelve (12) months. The loan line shall be equal to at least five (5%) percent of the bank's deposit liabilities as at end of prior month. The appropriate SED shall recommend to the Monetary Board any request for amendment of the line.

f. The bank shall be allowed the flexibility of changing or substituting collateral, specially matured government securities. The DLC shall act on such request, provided it will not result in an amendment of the approved overnight clearing line.

Sec 4. Availments Against the Approved Loan Line

Item 4.c of shall be re-numbered as 4.d and the following are hereby added as items c, e and f to read as follows:

c. The availments against the approved loan line shall bear interest at the ninety-one (91)-day Treasury Bill rate of the last auction immediately preceding the availments.

e. The loan value of the collaterals securing the loan line shall be correspondingly reduced under any of the following circumstances:

e.1 There are collections received on the mortgage credits;
e.2 The mortgage credits become past due;
e.3 The property mortgaged was sold; and
e.4 The collateral assets fall short of the definition of first class collateral.

f. The bank shall duly inform DLC of any collections on mortgaged credits or sale of assets mortgaged and ensure that adequate records on collections and sales made by the branches are maintained in its head office.

Sec 7. Procedures for Settling Losses

Item c. is hereby amended deleting the word DLC and shall now read as follows:

c. Collateralized overnight clearing line granted by the BSP.

Effectivity. This Circular shall take effect after fifteen days from date of its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

For the Monetary Board:

(*Sgd.*) DIWA C.GUINIGUNDO
Officer-In-Charge

06 March 2006

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Lukashenko wins poll; rivals cry foul

MINSK—BELARUS' PRESIDENT ALEXANDER Lukashenko cruised to a crushing election victory Monday as opponents vowed to continue protests against a vote they said had been rigged and the West prepared to give its own critical assessment.

Lukashenko, 51, was elected with 82.6 percent of the vote at Sunday's presidential election, compared to six percent for his nearest rival, Alexander Milinkevich, said the chair of the central election commission, Lidiya Yermoshina.

The figures remained unchanged as the final ballots were counted, officials quoted by the Itar-Tass news agency said.

There was no immediate reaction from the Belarussian leader, who has held the post since 1994, although he earlier said he expected a "normal result" and would be passing Sunday evening "quietly."

Opposition groups vowed to hold a new protest on Monday however after more than 10,000 opposition supporters gathered in a blizzard that whipped through the capital on Sunday—the largest opposition protest in the city in years.

"We will demand that this election be recognized as invalid, including by international organizations," Milinkevich told his supporters from the steps of the trade unions' palace.

Western election monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) were to publish their findings Monday, which judging from the OSCE's assessments in the run up to the vote were likely to be highly critical.

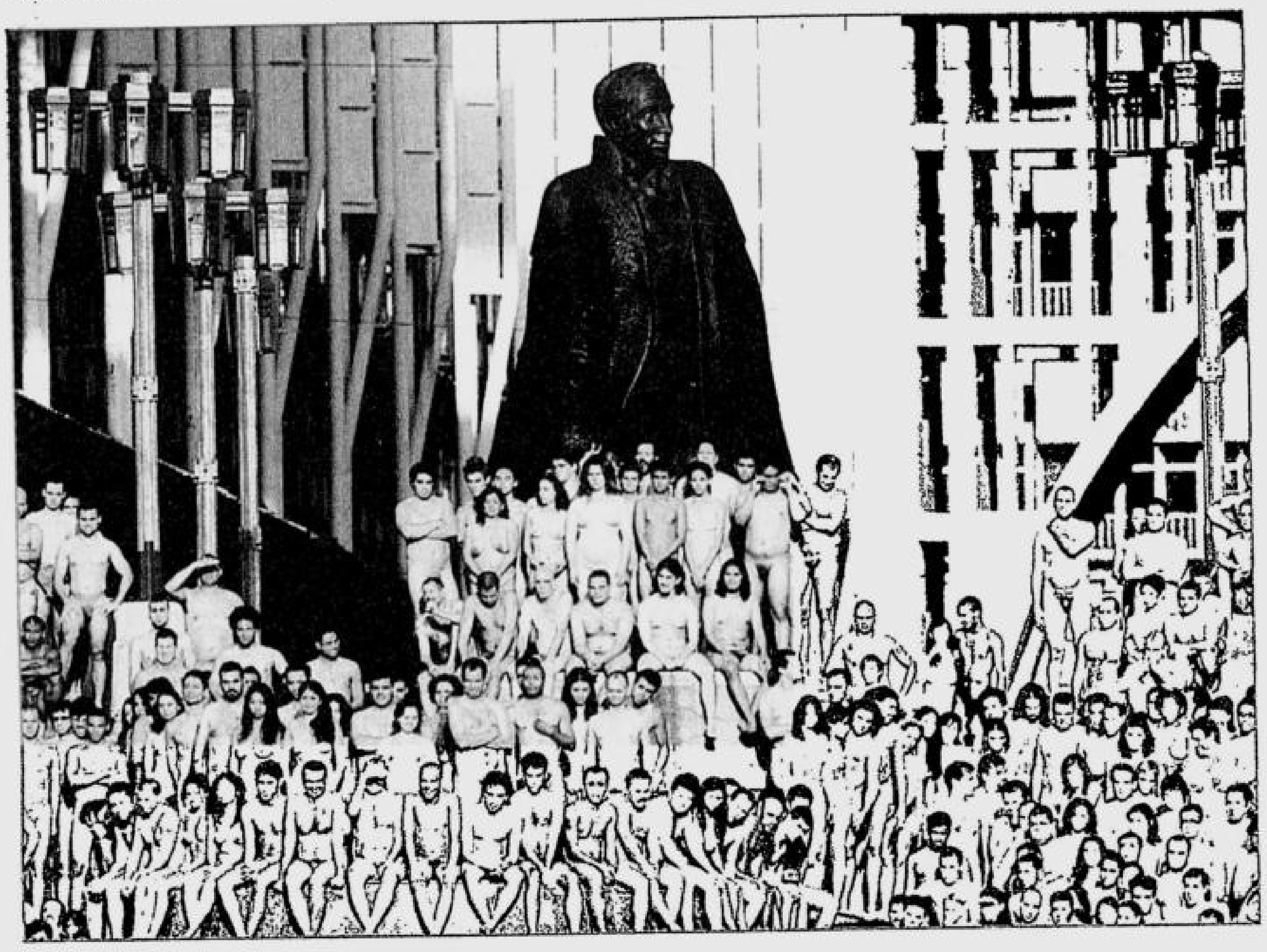
Russia looked like it would be at odds with the West on the matter, having accused the OSCE of a dangerous political bias in assessing countries that have remained in Moscow's orbit.

A top Russian election monitor, Vladimir Rushailo, voiced satisfaction at the range of foreign observers present for Sunday's vote—among them many from countries such as China, where democracy is barely practiced. *AFP*

LUKASHENKO AP

Key facts about Belarus

- THE COUNTRY BORDERS European Union members Lithuania and Latvia to the north and Poland to the west and ex-Soviet states Russia and Ukraine to the east and to the south. Population is about 9.751 million. The capital is Minsk.
- Belarus ("White Russia") became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. A drive to revive the Belarussian language and culture was crushed by Lukashenko, first elected in 1994. He reinstated many Soviet-era symbols, including a flag and coat-of-arms.
- Belarus was devastated in the course of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. One in four citizens died.
- In 1986, a third of Belarus was contaminated by radiation spread across Europe by an explosion over the border at Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear power plant.
- The economy is run on command lines. The government orders companies what to produce and at what prices to sell. Private property is outlawed. Key sectors are oil refining, chemicals and machine-building. Russia is the main trading partner. *Reuters*



THEIR BRAND OF VENERATION

Volunteer participants pose naked during a photo session with US photographer Spencer Tunick near a statue of Venezuela's national hero Simon Bolivar in Caracas March 19. REUTERS

Humanitarian crisis looms over Gaza Strip, UN warns

GAZA CITY—THE GAZA STRIP IS DANgerously short of basic foodstuffs and is facing a looming humanitarian crisis as a result of the continued closure of the main trade crossing with Israel, the United Nations warned Sunday.

As the US ambassador to Israel hosted talks aimed at resolving an increasingly bitter dispute over the border crossings, the Gaza director of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), said his organization had run out of food to distribute to the most impoverished families.

"Every day is taking us closer to a humanitarian crisis," John Ging told reporters.

"Flour and wheat are not the only products in short supply. There is a shortage of sugar, oil and many of the other basic commodities.

"If the borders remain closed then everything will begin to become a crisis in itself."

Israel has closed the Karni crossing for much of the year, citing security concerns. Negotiations about opening an alternative crossing have so far stalled.

In a bid to resolve the dispute, the US ambassador to Israel Richard Jones hosted talks at his residence Sunday involving Israeli, Palestinian, European and Egyptian officials.

Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erakat, who attended the meeting, said that it had not resulted in any breakthrough but all sides had agreed to further sessions.

"We discussed the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza which has come about because of the Israeli siege," Erakat told AFP after the meeting in a reflection of the bitterness between the two sides.

There was no comment from the Israelis whose delegation was led by the senior defense ministry official Amos Gilad.

Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas had earlier told reporters that he wanted to see rapid progress on the issue.

"We should find solutions, serious solutions, to ensure the continuous opening of the passages," he said.

Ging said it was essential that both sides come to an agreement as soon as possible.

"I am calling on everybody who can assist to solve the situation where the borders are closed and the result is that people here in Gaza do not have enough bread, the very basics that are needed to sustain our lives," he said.

"We have thousands of tons of food waiting at Karni crossing and we have used the reserves that we have here. They have already been distributed."

Gilad earlier told Israeli radio that Karni was shut for security reasons but Israel was prepared to open a terminal known as Kerem Shalom which borders Israel, Gaza and Egypt "in order to avoid a humanitarian crisis." *AFP*

Museum exhibits fine artifacts, but where are China's?

BEIJING—THE BRITISH MUSEum's first exhibition in China has left many Chinese wondering where their own country's priceless artifacts in the collection from the world's oldest museum have gone.

"Why are there no Chinese artifacts and (who) do the objects really belong to?" asked the official Xinhua news agency on Monday.

Over 270 artifacts from the ancient civilizations of Rome, Greece and Egypt have been put on display for the "Treasures of the World Cultures" exhibition that opened at Beijing's newly built Capital Museum on Saturday.

But relics from China are not there.

"I was really stunned by the beautiful artifacts from the different cultures, but why are there no Chinese antiques?" Xinhua quoted 19-year-old Wang Wei as saying.

The British Museum has in its collection thousands of oriental paintings, manuscripts, statues, ornaments, jewelry and other cultural relics smuggled out of China mainly in the late 19th century and early in the 20th century.

Many of them were traded to other parties before eventually being acquired by the museum.

"More than 20,000 Chinese artifacts including paintings, textiles, jade and metal objects are housed in the British Museum. Most of them were robbed or purchased for pennies more than 100 years ago," Xinhua said.

There were no Chinese relics in the exhibition partly because Beijing had refused to recognize British claims to them, according to the China Daily.

The British Museum has been under pressure in recent years from Greece, Egypt and China to return their artifacts but all requests have been refused so far, Xinhua said. *AFP*

US Marines accused of killing 15 Iraq civilians

NEW YORK—THE UNITED States military is investigating whether US Marines killed 15 civilians near the western Iraqi town of Haditha last November after their vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb, Time magazine reported in its Monday issue.

Human rights activists say that if the accusations prove to be true, the incident would rank as the worst case of deliberate killing of Iraqi civilians by US service members since the war began, the report said.

According to Time, the incident occurred on the morning of Nov. 19, 2005, when a roadside bomb struck a humvee carrying troops from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, on a road near Haditha.

The bomb killed Lance Corporal Miguel Terrazas from El Paso, Texas. The next day, the Marines said in a statement that Terrazas and 15 Iraqi civilians had died when gunmen attacked the convoy with small arms fire, prompting the Marines to return fire, killing eight insurgents and wounding one other.

But the details of what happened that morning in Haditha are more disturbing, disputed and horrific than the military initially reported, Time said.

According to eyewitnesses and local officials interviewed over the past 10 weeks, the civilians who died in Haditha were killed not by the roadside bomb but by the Marines themselves. They went on a rampage in the village after the attack, killing 15 unarmed Iraqis in their homes, including seven women and three children, the magazine said.

In January, after Time presented military officials in Baghdad with the Iraqis' accounts of the events, the US military opened its own investigation into the incident. The military interviewed 28 people, including the Marines, the families of the victims and local doctors, the report said.

The initial inquiry acknowledged that, contrary to the military's initial report, the 15 civilians died at the hands of the Marines, not the insurgents, the magazine said.

It added that the available evidence did not provide conclusive proof that the Marines deliberately killed innocent people in Haditha.

But human rights groups that also investigated the incident say survivors and local officials question whether the force used by the Marines was justified and whether they were initially candid about what took place, Time said. *AFP*

A SHIITE woman and son watch religious rites in Kerbala, March 19. REUTERS

Biometric passports for Japanese

TOKYO—JAPAN BEGAN MONday to issue passports with biometric data, meeting security measures imposed by the United States—the top destination for Japanese travelers.

The passports are equipped with IC, or integrated circuit, chips that provide personal information including photographs.

"With the introduction of IC chips, the counterfeiting of passports will be difficult," a foreign ministry statement said.

The International Civil Aviation Organization called in 2003 for countries to adopt IC chips with biometric information to enhance security in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

Japan's new passports will meet a US biometric requirement that comes into force from Oct. 26 for citizens of 27 countries, including Japan, who are allowed to visit without a visa.

Japanese passports are already machine readable, a condition the United States imposed from June last year. *AFP*

Current anti-Bush tirades employ one word: Incompetence

By Charlotte Raab

WASHINGTON—THE WAR IN IRAQ, budget deficits, the damaged case against Zacarias Moussaoui, port security—all the bad news that is sapping American morale and undercutting President George W. Bush's popularity comes from one source, according to opposition Democrats: incompetence.

The word figures prominently in speeches delivered by leading members of the opposition, who have turned charges of incompetence into a common refrain that can be heard in discussion of any issue at hand.

The charge has even eclipsed accusations of corruption that had been used for months to describe Republican legal woes, from the indictment of Lewis Libby, a former chief of staff for Vice President Dick Cheney, to the eight-year prison sentence handed down to Republican former Congressman Randy Cunningham for accepting bribes.

Democratic Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid mentioned "incompetence" three times in two sentences when he spoke to reporters last week.

Commenting on the trial of French national Moussaoui, the only US case linked to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Reid exclaimed: "Think about this, to show the incompetence of what's going on in Washington with this administration."

Reid was referring to a mistake committed by a government lawyer that almost saw the death penalty trial thrown out.

Charges of incompetence resonate even more because they are repeated by commentators of every political stripe.

"They made a whole series of mistakes," argued Stephen Hess, an analyst with the Brookings Institution, who worked for the Republican administrations of presidents Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon.

"In some cases, it's managerial incompetence," said Hess, commenting on the Bush administration's fiasco in managing the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that hit last August.

"In other instances, it's political incompetence," said Hess, referring to the administration's inability to anticipate fallout from a port management deal with DP World, a company based in the United Arab Emirates.

The mistake was even more surprising because the Bush team was credited with an infallible political sense following the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, which consolidated Republican control in both chambers of Congress.

The charges of "incompetence" that are being so widely aired are reminiscent of those heard in the months before the 2001 attacks, when opponents accused the Bush administration of "incompetence" and "arrogance."

Analysts considered the team that Bush, a former Texas governor, assembled when he took office in January 2001 extremely competent. But Bush's political honeymoon was a short one.

When Republicans lost control of the US Senate in May 2001 following the defection of Jim Jeffords, upset at the administration's decision to spurn the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gases, commentators began to question the White House's political skills. *AFP*

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SPORTS

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

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■ Nets down Mavs, end losing spell /A19

WHAT'S INSIDE

BAP seeks arbitration of Switzerland court

By Jasmine W. Payo

UNABLE TO REGAIN MEMBERSHIP IN THE Philippine Olympic Committee, the beleaguered Basketball Association of the Philippines has decided to file a case against the local Olympic body in the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) this month.

"We've exhausted all avenues to be readmitted to the POC because readmission is the sure-fire formula to immediately lift the (Fiba) suspension on the Philippines," said BAP president Joey Lina in a press conference yesterday.

"We have no choice now but to go outside and file a case at CAS."

Lina, who came out of nowhere last year to take over the BAP presidency from the ailing Quitellano "Tiny" Literal, said international basketball federation (Fiba) secretary general Patrick Baumann has already been notified of BAP's next action.

"It's an option we have been discussing with him," said Lina. "He won't be surprised.

"Our documents are ready. We have to substantiate our complaint (to CAS) that we were illegally expelled by POC."

The CAS is an international court that settles sports-related disputes. Based in Lausanne, Switzerland, it is independent of any sports organization and has nearly 300 arbitrators from 87 countries.

Lina's move came as the POC prepared to seek Fiba's recognition of Pilipinas Basketball, the new cage federation backed by four of five major stakeholders of the sport—PBA, PBL, UAAP and the NCAA.

The BAP is the fifth member of the group.

BAP/A18

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BALDNESS?
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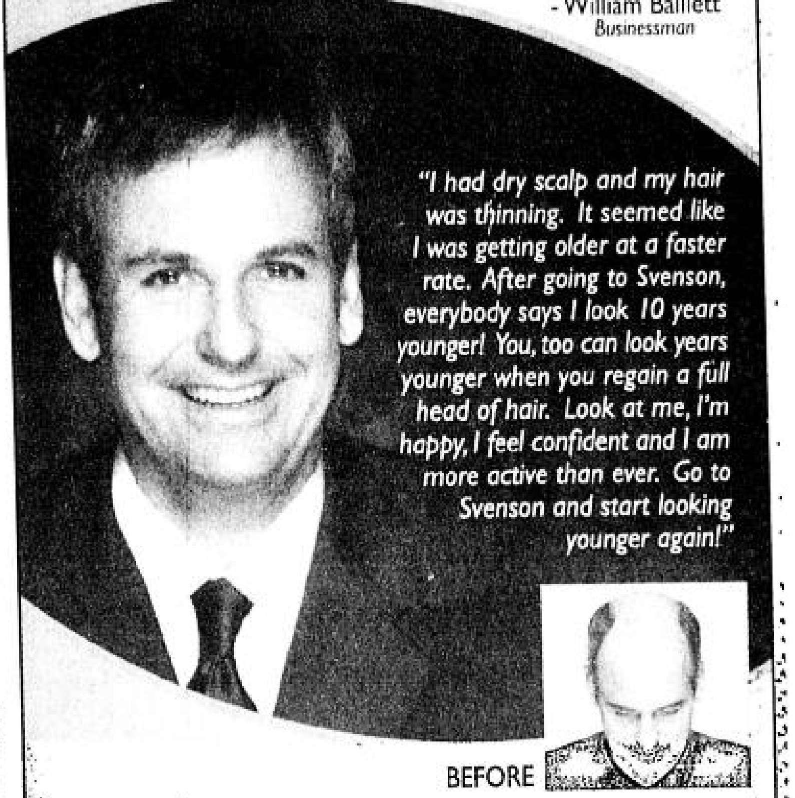
- William Balliett
Businessman



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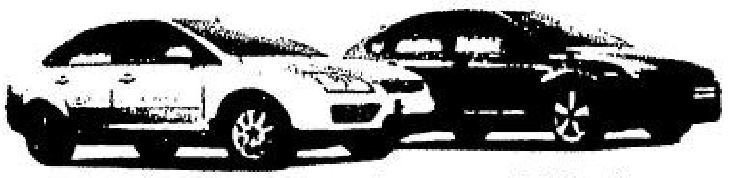

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Another PBA Hong Kong game in the works

EALA: PBA partners receptive to idea.

By June Navarro

HONG KONG—EVEN BEFORE TALK 'N Text and Purefoods could show their wares and hold overseas Filipino workers spellbound Sunday, another Philippine Basketball Association game in this former British territory was already on the drawing board.

Commissioner Noli Eala, in partnership with PLDT Global, has started planning another PBA treat for the OFWs in November with the world-renowned 15,000-seat Hong Kong Stadium being eyed as venue.

"It (the HK stadium) will cater to a bigger hoard of OFWs," said Eala prior to the Talk 'N Text-Purefoods match eventually won by the Phone Pals Sunday afternoon at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium here.

"Though nothing has been finalized yet, our partners are receptive to the idea," added Eala, who pioneered the move to hold a regular game in a foreign country.

Last season, the PBA brought its act to Jakarta, Indonesia, with the Phone Pals winning over the Shell Turbochargers in the league's first-ever overseas stint.

The league also plans to hold a regular game in Qatar sometime in May.

About 3,000 tickets were given away to the Hong Kong OFWs by PLDT Global, through its Smart 1528 mobile service, to acknowledge their role in boosting the country's economy through their dollar remittances.

"This is really for the OFWs," said Al Panlilio, CEO and president of the Hong Kong-based PLDT Global. "It's our way of thanking them for helping our economy. We're also excited to bring back the PBA here. We will have more time to plan and market it better the next time."

If negotiations for a second game in Hong Kong in November fall through, Singapore may be tapped as an alternate venue since PLDT Global is set to launch another mobile service there on March 26.

A Talk 'N Text source said PLDT Global would most likely become the chief partner of the PBA in future overseas games as the telecommunications firm stretches its reach to more Asian countries.

Lining takes over as Japan Open champ

ANTONIO LINING OUSTED DEFENDING champion Efren "Bata" Reyes in the quarterfinals and went on to capture the 2006 Japan Open 9-Ball Billiards Championship over longshot compatriot Don Don Razalan in Tokyo Sunday.

Lining, one of the country's top cue masters, blasted Razalan of Calauag, Quezon, 9-3, to cap an explosive run that included a 9-4 whipping of the revered Reyes in the quarterfinals.

A native of Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro, Lining outplayed Yuichi Yano of Japan, 9-4, in the last 16 and was in even more murderous form in the semifinals as he clobbered another Japanese, Kazuhiko Yamauchi, 9-2.

The surprisingly tough Razalan reached the finals with a 9-8 upset of crack Japanese Satoshi Kawabata.

He beat fellow Filipino underdog Ruel Esquillio, 9-3, in the quarterfinals after another 9-8 escape over Japan's Masaaki Tanaka in the last 16.

The championship victory was worth about P645,000 for Lining, third placer in the Manila leg of the 2005 SMB Asian 9-ball Tour.

Francisco "Django" Bustamante, the acknowledged Filipino No. 2 behind Reyes, bowed out in the last 16 along with Antonio Gabica and Rodolfo Luat.

Bustamante lost to Japanese Takeshi Okumura, 9-3; Gabica was eliminated by Yamauchi, 9-4; while Luat stumbled against Esquillio, 9-8.

In the distaff side, Southeast Asian Games double gold medalist Rubilen "Bingkay" Amit made it to the last 8 while Iris Rañola got only as far as the last 16.

Su I-Yun of Chinese Taipei captured the women's title after crushing Japan's Yukiko Hamanishi, 8-2, in the finals.

"*Medyo minalas na naman ako* (I was unlucky again)," said the 24-year-old Amit, who dropped a heartbreaking 8-6 decision to Kimiko Yamauchi.

Amit also absorbed a close 6-5 defeat to Sweden's Charlotte Sorensen, 5-6, in her debut in the 2006 World Championships won by Kim Ga-young of South Korea recently.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

ANTONIO "Nickoy" Lining dethrones compatriot Efren "Bata" Reyes.

BAP seeks arbitration...

From page A17

Lina maintained that the "expedient and practical" way to lift the Fiba suspension is to incorporate the major stakeholders into a restructured BAP. The POC and the stakeholders, he stressed, have already agreed on this process in previous meetings.

"We were already holding the draft of the amended by-laws of BAP," said Lina, who later quit the stakeholders' group following its decision to form a new body that would replace the BAP.

During the press conference, Lina presented Fiba documents that he said clarified the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the POC and the Fiba last Sept. 29.

"The POC is not showing these documents," said Lina of the two letters signed by Baumann dated Oct. 5 and Oct. 27, 2005. "The POC continues to take the MoU as the absolute document, but the MoU was clarified by Fiba."

He said the POC interpreted the MoU as calling for the new organization (Pilipinas Basketball) to replace the BAP.

"But the MoU process, as clarified, says that before forming a new federation, the BAP must be expelled from Fiba," he stressed.

Unhappy with the way amateur basketball was being run, the POC general assembly expelled the BAP by unanimous vote last June.

The Fiba, once headed by former BAP president Gonzalo "Lito" Puyat, responded by banning the country from all international competitions.

Lina said filing a case in the CAS is no guarantee that the Fiba suspension will be lifted in time for the Asian Games this December.

RP sports still waits for First Gent's help

ARROYO

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WILL HE OR WON'T HE?

The repeated calls for First Gentleman Mike Arroyo to return as the country's premier fund-raiser for sports has remained unanswered, leaving preparations for the Doha Asian Games at a standstill with just nine months left.

Philippine Olympic Committee first vice president Rep. Monico Puentevella yesterday said that the First Gentleman has yet to reply to a formal POC letter requesting his return as chief of mission for the December Asiad, as well as reassuming his role as chief fund-raiser.

"We are still trying to convince him," Puentevella told the INQUIRER.

The First Gentleman announced last month his decision to leave RP sports due to numerous criticisms, including his presence during the Manny Pacquiao fight in January and the Hong Kong trip by some 200 national athletes last year.

Puentevella, considered the strongest link of the POC to Malacañang, conveyed the POC's invitation for Arroyo to be the Asian Games chief of mission and reprise his role during the 23rd Southeast Asian Games last December.

Meanwhile, Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez yesterday acknowledged the help they used to enjoy from Arroyo, who had raised funds for the past two SEA Games, including the all-time high of P160 million for athletes' training last year.

"Everything depends on the help we could get from the First Gentleman," said Ramirez, who is set to meet with Chinese Sports Minister Liu Peng in August to renew sports ties between the two countries.

Pacquiao the greatest

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

WHO IS THE GREATEST OF THEM ALL?

I pose that question because the same question was posed to me only a while back.

The question came no less from Quinito Henson, the country's undisputed expert in boxing.

"Do you think Manny Pacquiao is the greatest of them all?" asked Quinito. "If yes is your reply, why?"

Quinito said he was doing a magazine solely devoted to Pacquiao.

"It's a collector's item," he said.

Oh, well, you bet.

Anything that has to do with Pacquiao nowadays, it's a sure hit.

Commercials here and there are raking in money for the Pacman. The movies he has made thus far have likewise fattened his bank accounts.

"If it's Pacquiao we are airing on pay-per-view TV, we always score big at the tills," said Dennis Uy, inventor of the gadget that brings to your living rooms Pacquiao's blockbuster fights live. "But when we did the same thing to other boxers, we lost money."

In short, Pacquiao has now the Midas touch. Everything that he touches turns into gold.

And I can only be too happy for Pacquiao. He deserves the windfall. As I said, it's not easy being a boxer. In this sport, you get hit first, you get hurt first, your nose gets broken or your eyebrows get cut or your lips get busted, before you get paid. You could be in stitches and bandages after a fight that you sometimes end up like a zombie. Only your wife and mother could hug and kiss you but not your child, who'd be too scared to death seeing a walking mummy! In golf, you get to enjoy the sun and the flowers and next collect your purse—unscathed.

Now, to go back to the question: Who is the greatest of them all, Pancho Villa, Flash Elorde or Manny Pacquiao?

I did not see Villa (real name, Francisco Guilledo) as he came before we were all born—in the Roaring Twenties. But I have heard so much about him, read so much about him. According to those in the know, Villa was good, courageous and a bit flashy. With a ring name borrowed from the great Mexican revolutionary hero, Pancho Villa, our kid, originally from Iloilo, captured the imagination of American boxing fans, if not the world's adulation. He fought 105 times, winning 88 of them, losing nine and drawing five; he had three no-decision verdicts (thanks for the stats, Eric).

Every time Pancho Villa came home from a victory in America, he'd ride in a flashy, top-down automobile for a motorcade in Manila in his honor. He loved the limelight as much as he loved women; sometimes, he'd have three girl friends at the same time. When he died from an infected tooth aggravated by a fight in California that he shouldn't have fought in the first place as per doctor's orders, he drew a record throng during the funeral cortege to the Manila North Cemetery. That record was eclipsed only when the remains of the late President Ramon Magsaysay were being taken also to the Manila North Cemetery.

Pancho Villa's legend will always crop up every time a new kid on the block comes along—such as Manny Pacquiao.

But comes now Flash Elorde, the former bootblack from Bogo, Cebu, who was world junior lightweight champion from 1960 to 1967. Like Villa, Elorde is a certified boxing legend.

A southpaw like Pacquiao, Elorde electrified the world with his punching ability, more so that his right hand had, amazingly, scored more knockouts than his left hand. He fought 115 times, winning 88 of them including 34 knockouts, losing 25 and drawing two. He had overstayed in the beak-busting business, though, and his undoing triggered successive defeats.

Soon, he found himself getting stripped of his boxing license by the Games and Amusements Board. A sorry ending, indeed, for the icon whose death due to lung cancer at age 49 triggered a national mourning.

So, who's the greatest?

I say it's Pacquiao. His record of 41 wins, three losses and two draws—with 33 knockouts—is simply too awesome to be ignored. Pacquiao's punching power has no equal. His ability to survive knockout blows (his 2 KO losses were flukes) is without equal. His fighting style—with both fists capable of scoring knockouts, his shuffle and body movements correct—is now virtually complete.

Of course, that estimation will change once Pacquiao transforms from a disciplined fighter to a spoiled brat and starts piling up the losses.

In short, it's up to Pacquiao if he wants to uphold my verdict of him all his boxing life.

***

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Junior shuttlers gun for berths

THE CHASE FOR BERTHS IN THE MAIN draw of the 2006 JVC Open Juniors Championships begins today with the staging of the first of the qualifiers at PowerSmash in Makati City.

A banner field of over 500 youngsters in three classes is seeing action in the four-day qualifier sponsored by JVC (Phils.) and organized by IMG.

The 100-player roster in the girls' singles doubled last year's field while the boys' singles drew 188 entries, an increase of 45 percent. The field grew by about 58 percent compared to last year.

Hostilities start at 4 p.m. with 11 matches on tap in boys' singles in the 12-under division. Action in the girls' side, also in the 12-under group, kicks off at 5 p.m., before the boys' competition resumes at 6 p.m. with the round-of-32 matches.

Matches in the 14-under class in both sides will be held tomorrow, while action in the 12-under resumes on Thursday. Competitions in the 10-under division will be held Friday.

2 more cage venues for BEST

MILO BEST CENTER'S BASketball program has added two more venues in order to accommodate more enrollees this summer.

These are Xavier School Sports Center and Christ The King Seminary on E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City.

Level 1 and 2 classes will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. every Tuesday and Sunday from April 2 to 25 at Xavier, while level 1 clinics will be conducted from 1 to 4:30 p.m. every Monday and Thursday from April 3 to 27 at Christ The King.

Jose Rizal University on Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong, will also hold level 1 and 2 sessions from 1 to 4:40 p.m. every Wednesday and Saturday from April 5-29.

For inquiries, call 411-6260 or 372-3066 or telefax 672-3065.

SPORTSWATCH

Poker main event moved

THE MAIN EVENT OF THE PHILIPPINE POKER Tour (PPT) Million-Peso Hold'em Philippine Championship has been moved to April 29-30. The new schedule was in deference to the observance of Holy Week and in response to requests from players. The venue is still the Airport Casino Filipino Theater in Parañaque, a premium site of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) headed by senior branch manager Rogelio "JB" Bangsil. Poker Tour chair Rey Gamboa said the change in dates will give participants the opportunity to hone their skills in the chase for prizes amounting to P1.6 million. Non-wager satellite tournaments are held weekly in various accredited sites. For inquiries, call the Secretariat (c/o Cindy) at 817-9092 or 812-0153.

YMCA summer clinics set

YMCA MAKATI IS OFFERING SWIMMING, BASketball, tennis and martial arts clinics starting March 27 at No. 7 Sacred Heart St., San Antonio Village, Makati City. Swimming classes will be held in four batches: batch 1 (March 27-April 7), batch 2 (April 17- 28), batch 3 (May 1-12) and batch 4 (May 15-26); basketball: batch 1 (March 27-April 7), batch 2 (April 17-28), batch 3 (May 1-12), batch 4 (May 15-26); tennis: batch 1 (April 17-28), batch 2 (May 1-12) and batch 3 (May 15-26); aikido (April 17-May 26); Muay-Thai/kicboxing (April 17-May 26). For inquiries, call 899-6380 to 82, 899-6101 to 03, 899-8255.

80 fights up at Araneta

MORE THAN 80 FIGHTS SPICE UP THE SECOND leg of the Philippine Heritage Cup 5-Cock Derby series starting at 4 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum. Major sponsors are Gran Matador and B-Meg Derby Ace. The championship of the first leg, held Feb. 21 and 23, was shared by John Reyes and Danny Halili, Raffy Campos and Edwin Aranez, Tony Oppen, Raul Adan, Anthony Lim, Buddy Robregado, Baggay Brothers and Nono San Pablo. For inquiries, call 911-3101/2928.

GCAP derby listing today

ENTRIES VYING IN TOMORROW'S GENTLEMEN Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-cock derby must be submitted today from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the San Juan Coliseum. The showdown of top cockfighters, sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, starts at 5 p.m. tomorrow with 70 fights on tap. Cris Milla's Gerona entry topped the fourth GCAP derby recently. For inquiries, call 725-5369 or 725-6563.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Selfmade (1), Pretty Pretty Girl (6), High Spirit (3), Humble Guest (9), Summer Rain (8).
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Manila's Style/Crystal City (4), Rosebud (5), Espirikitik (8), Sandry Forex (1), Sutter's Quest (10)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Inca (7), Sir Guguy (6), Gemstone (4), Western Legend (2)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Honoree (6), Truly Impressive (4), Hurry Prince (5), Golden Touch (8), Look of Love (3)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Mercurian (5), Stingray (3), Kaligatan (8), Dora Gelay (1)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Blitzkrieg (10), Modern Classic (2), Fair Urduja (5), American Idol (1), Ravishing Rally (3)
Race 7- (Penta/Qrt/Tri) - Daldalera/Mountain Eagle (8), Jaw Breaker (10), The Magician (2), Aya's Dream (3), The Dominator (7)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Pirouette (11), Anytime Anywhere (4), King View (3), Mesmerize (7), Silver Cho Cho (10)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Kawilwili (2), Kalashnikov (6), El Cid (4), Brazen Truth (11), Reign Of Fire (12)

Patriots eliminate champion Tar Heels

NEW YORK—DEFENDING CHAMPION NORTH Carolina suffered a shock 65-60 loss to George Mason University and saw its dreams of another title end in the second round of the NCAA Tournament on Sunday.

Second-seeded Ohio State were also eliminated, but top seeds Connecticut, Memphis and Villanova advanced, as did underdog Bradley.

North Carolina (23-8), a surprise contender this season after losing its top seven scorers from last year's championship team, ran out of steam in the second half against George Mason.

The 11th-seeded Patriots took control inside and held Tar Heels' standout Tyler Hansbrough to 10 points.

Lamar Butler scored 18 points as George Mason (25-7) overcame a 16-2 deficit in the Washington Regional game at Dayton, Ohio.

No. 7 seed Georgetown (23-9) ousted Ohio State, 70-52, behind Roy Hibbert's 20 points, and 13th seed Bradley pulled off another upset by defeating fifth-seeded Pittsburgh, 72-66.

Patrick O'Bryant had 28 points for Bradley (22-10), which shocked Kansas in the first round.

Marcus Williams had 20 points and Rudy Gay 19 as Connecticut (29-3) squeezed past eight-seeded Kentucky, 87-83, in the Washington Regional at Philadelphia.

Memphis (32-3) crushed Bucknell, 72-56 as the Tigers (32-3) won the Oakland Regional at Dallas.

Villanova turned back Arizona, 82-78, in the Minneapolis Regional. Allan Ray had 25 points and Randy Foye 24 for Villanova (27-4).

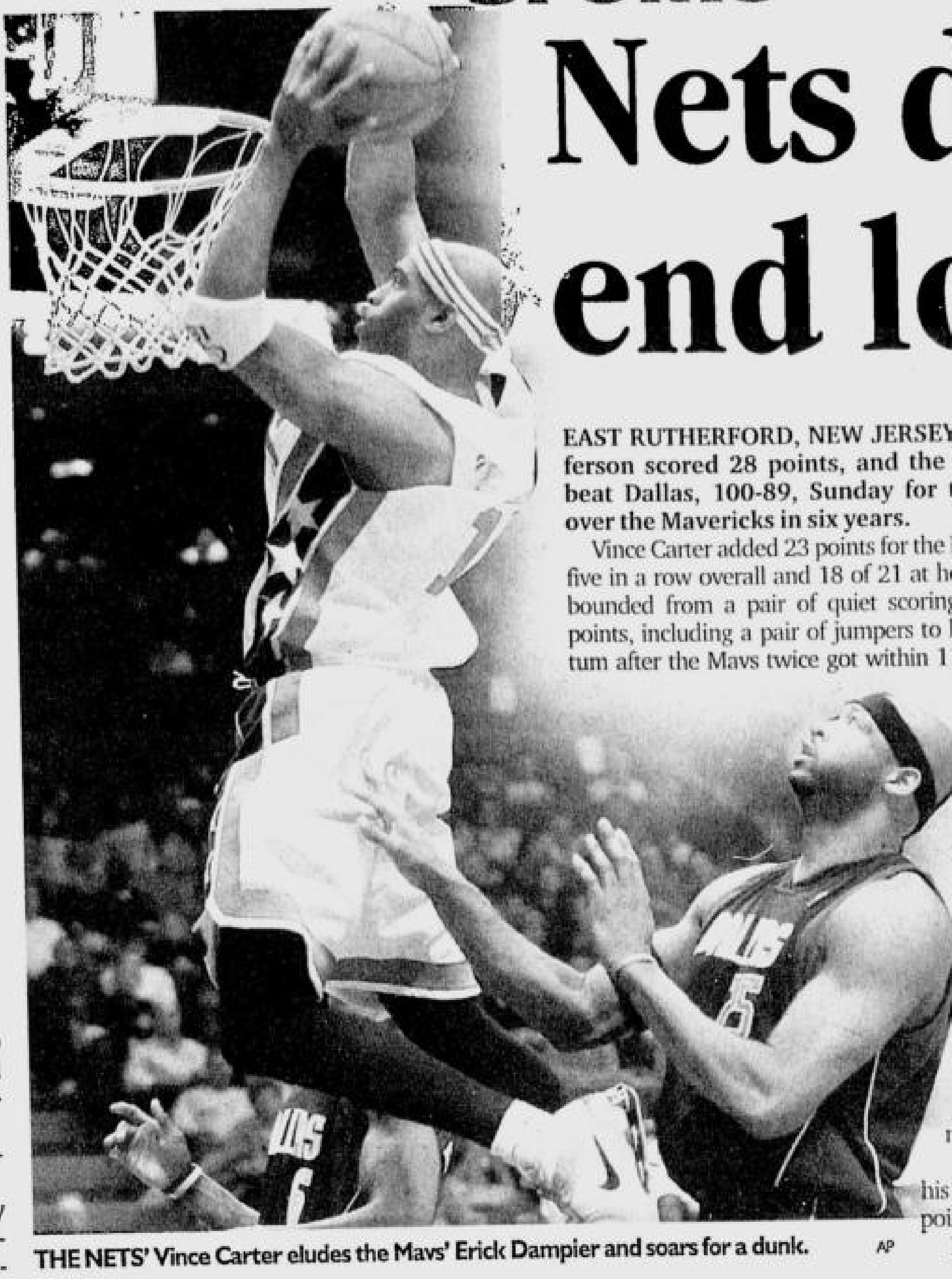
Duke, the other No. 1 seed, won its second-round game, defeating Georgetown, 74-61.

Second-seeded Texas defeated North Carolina State, 75-54, at Dallas and sixth-seeded West Virginia ousted Northwestern State of Louisiana, 67-54, at Auburn Hills, Michigan.

The tournament resumes on Thursday with 16 teams still vying for the championship. *Reuters*

GEORGE Mason's Sammy Hernandez celebrates the Patriots' win. AP/POTOMAC NEWS

Nets down Mavs, end losing spell



THE NETS' Vince Carter eludes the Mavs' Erick Dampier and soars for a dunk. AP

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—RICHARD JEFferson scored 28 points, and the New Jersey Nets beat Dallas, 100-89, Sunday for their first victory over the Mavericks in six years.

Vince Carter added 23 points for the Nets, who have won five in a row overall and 18 of 21 at home. Jason Kidd rebounded from a pair of quiet scoring games to add 15 points, including a pair of jumpers to halt Dallas' momentum after the Mavs twice got within 11 early in the fourth quarter.

New Jersey had lost 11 straight meetings since its last victory over Dallas on March 2, 2000. With the win, the Nets knocked the Mavs out of a share of the top spot in the Western Conference.

Nenad Krstic had 18 points and 13 rebounds for the Nets, and Kidd had nine assists.

Dirk Nowitzki tied his season high with 37 points for Dallas.

In other games, the Cleveland Cavaliers nipped the Los Angeles Lakers, 96-95; the Washington Wizards blasted the Chicago Bulls, 113-104; the Minnesota Timberwolves downed the Sacramento Kings, 95-89; the Golden State Warriors routed the Philadelphia 76ers, 98-89; the Boston Celtics clobbered the Indiana Pacers, 103-88; the Memphis Grizzlies repulsed the Utah Jazz, 90-84; the Atlanta Hawks nipped the Orlando Magic in overtime, 108-107; and the Miami Heat thrashed the New York Knicks, 111-100.

In Cleveland, Flip Murray hit a free throw with 3.4 seconds left and scored 14 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter to lead the Cavaliers.

The Lakers had one last chance to win, but Kobe Bryant's 3-pointer clanked off the back of the rim as time expired. Bryant finished with 38 points.

LeBron James led Cleveland with 29 points, eight rebounds and seven assists, and Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 25 points and seven rebounds.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas had 29 points and seven assists, and Antonio Daniels scored a season-high 21 on his 31st birthday for the Wizards.

Caron Butler scored 25 points, and Antawn Jamison had 23, giving the Wizards four 20-point scorers in a game for the first time since Nov. 25 at Detroit.

Ben Gordon led Chicago with 20 points.

In Minneapolis, Kevin Garnett scored a season-high 37 points to help Minnesota snap a seven-game losing streak.

Trenton Hassell had 12 points for Minnesota. *AP*

- **NBA game on Solar Sports**

9:30 a.m.—Los Angeles Clippers vs. Houston Rockets (replay at 8 p.m.)

Federer pauses, then rolls over Blake

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—ROGER FEDERER thought James Blake's play early in their match looked familiar.

"He played aggressively, took the ball early, put away his forehands when he could, didn't miss on the backhand, made me run around," Federer said. "That's usually what I do. He gave me a little bit of my own medicine."

Only a small dose, as it turned out.

After falling behind 4-1 in the opening set, the top-ranked Federer came back to beat Blake 7-5, 6-3, 6-0 Sunday for an unprecedented third consecutive Pacific Life Open championship.

FEDERER: Too good

"He really got the better of me in the beginning, so I had to react and not panic," Federer said. "I did a good job there.

The championship signaled that Federer is back in top form following his lone loss of the year, to Rafael Nadal in Dubai this month. With the title, Federer kept intact his record of having never lost finals in consecutive tournaments.

Blake, No. 14 and assured of moving into the top 10 for the first time when the rankings come out this week, said Federer simply turned it on after he fell behind. He was smiling when the match ended and shook Federer's hand.

Federer won for the 25th time in his 36 tournaments dating to the start of 2004. He is 22-1 this year and his three titles include the Australian Open, his seventh Grand Slam title.

Maria Sharapova won the Indian Wells women's title Saturday with a 6-1, 6-2 victory over Elena Dementieva. *AP*

Pampling wins; Owen gives it away

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—AUSTRALIAN ROD Pampling thought he had thrown away the Bay Hill Invitational. Greg Owen gave it right back Sunday by missing two putts inside 3 feet.

Pampling closed with an even-par 72 for a one-shot victory over Owen, prevailing over the final two holes after starting the day with a four-shot lead.

Trying to win his first US PGA Tour event, Owen took the lead by a stroke by getting up-and-down from the bunker for a birdie on the par-5 16th. And when Pampling bogeyed the 17th, Owen was ahead by two shots, and faced a 3-foot par putt.

But he pushed the putt so badly it never touched the hole, and then he missed the 2-footer to fall back into a tie for the lead.

"It was one of those silly mistakes I'll be remembered for," Owen said.

On the 18th, Owen hit a remarkable shot from the bunker with his feet above the ball to 12 feet, needing that par putt to force a playoff. Instead, the ball lipped out for a bogey to give him a 69 and leave him alone in second place.

Owen dropped his putter and turned away, covering his face with both hands.

Pampling, a winner for the second time on the US tour, was equally stunned. The 36-year-old let everyone into the tournament by hitting his tee shot on the 13th hole into the backyard of a course-side home and made double bogey.

Darren Clarke never got closer than two shots of the lead, closed with a 70 and wound up alone in third. Robert Allenby finished fourth with a 69. Tiger Woods closed with a 72 to finish 10 shots behind.

BRITAIN'S Greg Owen covers his face after missing his par putt on No. 18. AP

PBL PREVIEW

Well-rounded Harbour five now a threat

WHEN IT CAME TO WHIPPING OPPONENTS, Harbour Centre was as efficient and exciting as any other team in the league the last time out. In fact, they emerged as the No. 1 scoring team—thanks mainly to a bevy of prolific and explosive scorers.

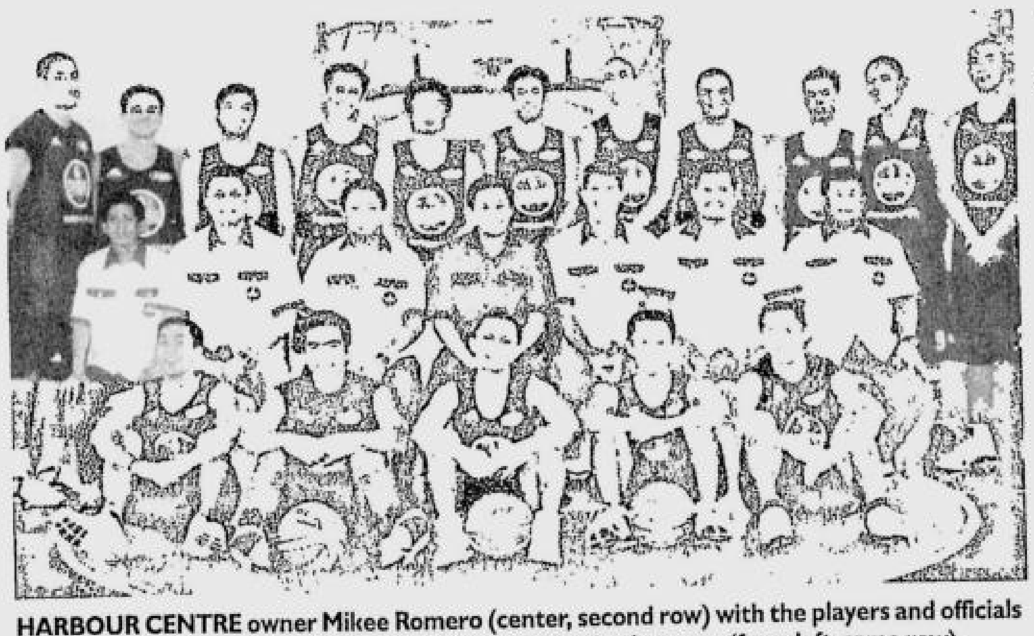
With Joseph Yeo, LA Tenorio and Rob Reyes at the helm, the Port Masters normed an impressive 77 points a game. But when it came to shutting down foes, they were found wanting.

Hopefully, not anymore.

With new defensive muscles in the shaded lane, the Port Masters should be considered as one of the teams to beat in the 2006 PBL Unity Cup which unfurls this Saturday at the San Andres gym in Malate.

"We have no problem with our offense the last time but we really struggled on the defensive end. We hope we can do better this time," said team owner Mikee Romero. "We learned from our mistakes the last time, so we hope we can plug the holes by acquiring several players whom we feel are tailor-made for us."

Romero was referring to the acquisition of several role players led by 6-foot-5 Allan Gamboa, 6-foot-4 Rico Maierhofer and former pro Gec Chia, who are expected to provide experience and stability to the team.



HARBOUR CENTRE owner Mikee Romero (center, second row) with the players and officials of the team for the coming 2006 PBL Unity Cup. Also in photo are (from left, same row) Monch Gavieres, Richard del Rosario, team manager Erick Arejola, coach Jorge Gallent, Rafa Dinglasan and Senen Duenas.

"We like our chances this time but our success will all depend on my players' performance. LA is determined to leave the amateur ranks as a winner so I just hope that will work wonders for us," said Romero.

Tenorio, who was elevated as team skipper, will be playing his last tournament in the country's premier amateur league and he's likely to dish out his best to boost his stock when he joins the pro league this October.

Aside from Gamboa, Maierhofer and Chia, a former Ateneo star, Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent has also acquired former La Salle star Ryan Araña and veteran guard Chico Lanete.

"Gamboa, Araña, Maierhofer, Lanete and Chia will surely boost our campaign this time. Araña is a good finisher in transition while Lanete can also hit from the outside," said Gallent.

Harbour Centre, according to team manager Erick Arejola, has also retained the services of beefy forward Jerwin Gaco, Chad Alonzo, Jerome Paterno, Jenkins Mesina and JA Coching.

Aside from Lanete, Gallent is also counting on the hustle and offense of Earn Saguindel and Ryan Dy.

Japan-Cuba matchup a Classic showdown

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA—SO much for US Major League Baseball players being the best in the world.

The two teams playing Monday night for the championship of the World Baseball Classic, Cuba and Japan, have a total of two players on American team rosters.

The Cubans have none, and Japan's Ichiro Suzuki had little insight to offer on his opponent.

"In terms of Cuba, I have no idea what to expect," the Seattle Mariners' leadoff hitter and right fielder said. "I don't know any of their names. The fact they've come this far shows they are a team with serious potential."

And serious credentials—last year's World Cup title, the 2004 Olympic championship and a victory in the 2003 Pan American Games to name just a few.

The Cubans, with their deep pitching staff, have won all but two of their last 24 games in international play with one of those losses coming to Japan in the Athens Olympics.

The Cubans are a confident bunch who consider themselves amateurs despite their fame back home. They advanced with an emotional 3-1 victory over the Dominican Republic Saturday.

Japan then avenged two earlier WBC losses to South Korea and won 6-0 in the second semifinal.

"I want you to know that what you saw today is what will continue to happen," said Cuban outfielder Yoandy Garlobo. "We're prepared for this physically and mentally. Cuba is prepared." *AP*

MICROVAN
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MEGA SALE!
on March 31, 2006 • Starts at 8:30 a.m. sharp.

Doha races against time to host Asian Games

DUBAI—DOHA HAS TURNED into a vast building site as it races against time to be ready to host December's Asian Games. But despite rumors of unreadiness, organizers vow the $2.8-billion facilities will be set when the Games begin.

State-of-the-art sports facilities that include the world's largest sports dome, swanky malls and a much-improved traffic infrastructure are to greet the thousands of athletes and visitors when the quadrennial event is held.

Meanwhile, the capital of gas-rich Qatar must endure the noise of non-stop construction and inconvenience of vast traffic jams, and some of the city's 750,000 usually tranquil residents have started to complain.

And now rumors are circulating that the 15th Asian Games will be transferred to another city because Qatar will not be ready on Dec. 1.

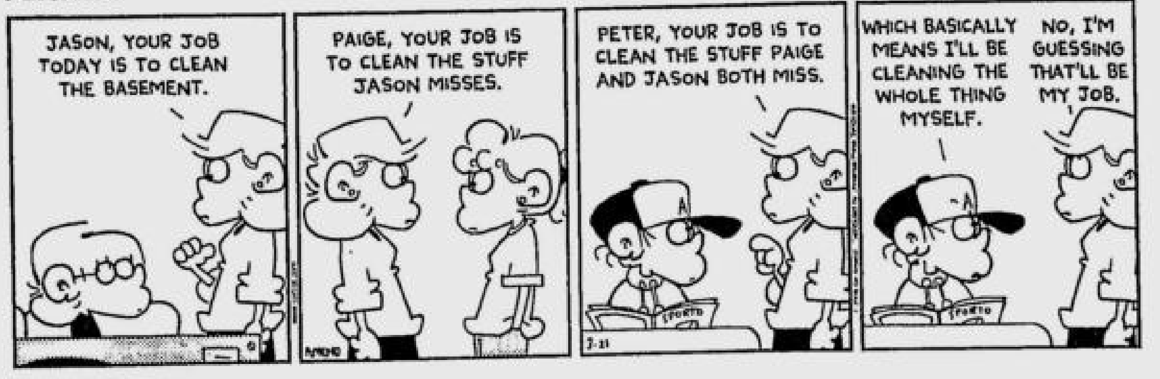
"I don't respond to rumors, but I can confirm that we will be ready on the date set to welcome" the games, said Ahmad al-Qahtani, general director of the Games' organizing committee.

Relatively small at 11,437 square kilometers, Qatar has proved itself as a pivotal hub for a wide range of events, but nothing can be compared with the enormity of the Asian Games.

"Most of the sites reserved for the official competition are ready," Qahtani confidently said. *AFP*

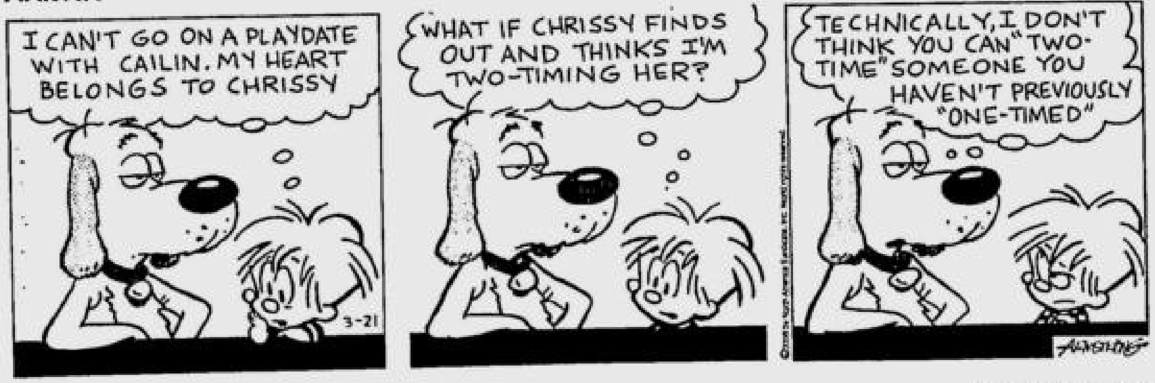
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


JASON, YOUR JOB TODAY IS TO CLEAN THE BASEMENT.
PAIGE, YOUR JOB IS TO CLEAN THE STUFF JASON MISSES.
PETER, YOUR JOB IS TO CLEAN THE STUFF PAIGE AND JASON BOTH MISS.
WHICH BASICALLY MEANS I'LL BE CLEANING THE WHOLE THING MYSELF.
NO, I'M GUESSING THAT'LL BE MY JOB.

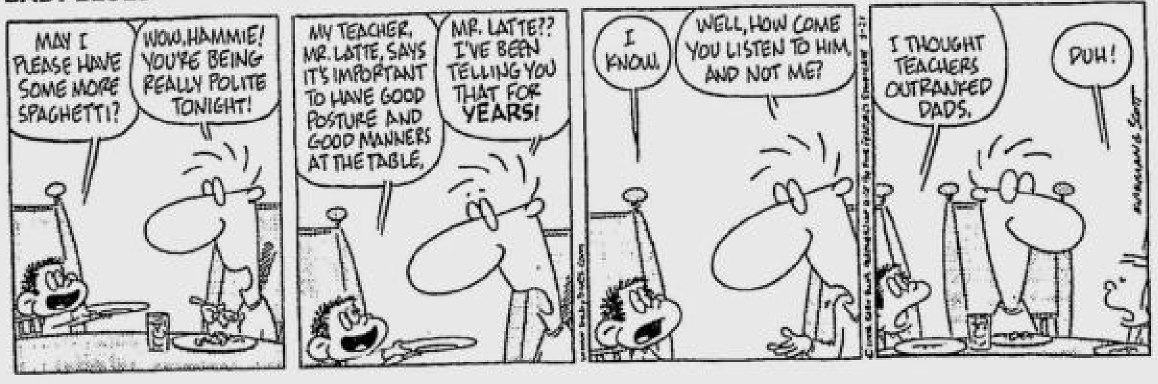
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I CAN'T GO ON A PLAYDATE WITH CAILIN. MY HEART BELONGS TO CHRISSY
WHAT IF CHRISSY FINDS OUT AND THINKS I'M TWO-TIMING HER?
TECHNICALLY, I DON'T THINK YOU CAN "TWO-TIME" SOMEONE YOU HAVEN'T PREVIOUSLY "ONE-TIMED"
3-21

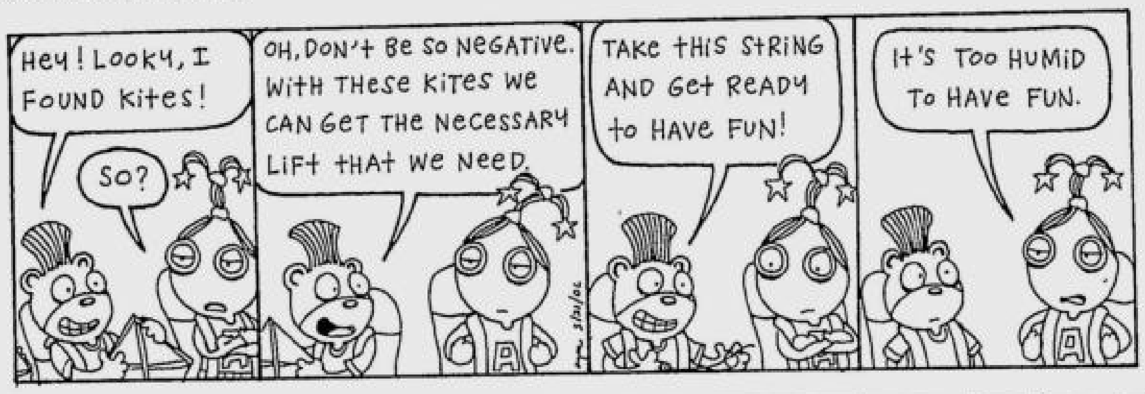
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MAY I PLEASE HAVE SOME MORE SPAGHETTI?
WOW, HAMMIE! YOU'RE BEING REALLY POLITE TONIGHT!
MY TEACHER, MR. LATTE, SAYS IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE GOOD POSTURE AND GOOD MANNERS AT THE TABLE.
MR. LATTE?? I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU THAT FOR YEARS!
I KNOW.
WELL, HOW COME YOU LISTEN TO HIM, AND NOT ME?
I THOUGHT TEACHERS OUTRANKED DADS.
DUH!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey! Looky, I found kites!
So?
Oh, don't be so negative. With these kites we can get the necessary lift that we need.
Take this string and get ready to have fun!
It's too humid to have fun.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a curious combination of dreamer and realist. You are bold and direct, yet romantic and extremely creative. Your complexities confuse those who do not understand you. You have excellent organizational skills combined with leadership qualities. The year ahead promises romance, enjoyment and increased opportunities to socialize with others. Make the most of it, and enjoy yourself!
Birthdate of: Gary Oldman, actor; Rosie O'Donnell, actress; Rani Mukherjee, Bollywood star.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Do something out of the ordinary today! You want adventure and you want to learn something new. Give yourself this chance. Talk to people from different cultures.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Friends from the past are in touch with you once again. You might also have the opportunity to reconsider joining a group. (This is a good day to borrow something if you need it.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're entering a popular month ahead! Contacts with bosses and authority figures from your past are likely now. Conversations with partners are significant today.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): People definitely notice you now. This will continue for the next few weeks because the Sun is at the top of your chart. Use today to get better organized.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Today the Moon is in Sagittarius, and this fits nicely with your fiery Leo Sun. Set aside some time to play and party! Enjoy pleasant times with children as well.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You need a little bit of private time just for yourself. You've got something important to do. Discussions with parents and family members are significant today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a busy day! Short trips, errands and conversations with siblings fill your time. You want to talk about someone who is close to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Stay on top of your finances today. This is also a good day to shop. You have increased energy now because you want to get better organized. (Make hay while the sun shines!)

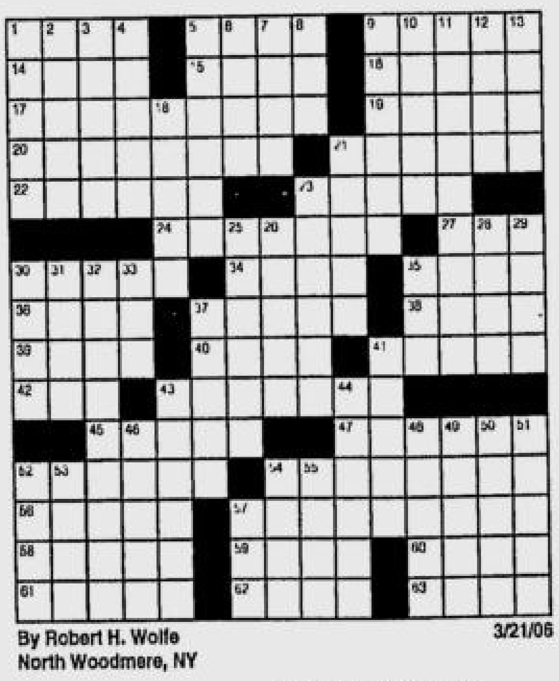
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): The Moon is in your sign today, and this brings you extra good luck. Nevertheless, don't bet the farm. Discussions with family members about past business are important now. Settle matters related to children.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Try to get a little time to be by yourself today. This solitude will help you. You have private things you need to think about.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): A female friend needs your attention now. Be open to discussions with others. Siblings and relatives also want more of your time. Just go with the flow.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Retrograde Mercury continues to bring all kinds of people from your past back into your life. Talk to parents and bosses about financial matters today.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

ACROSS
1 Be in front
5 Melville's captain
9 Ferber and Best
14 Sax type
15 Cable
16 French pancake
17 Illinois stream?
19 Downgrade
20 Not connected
21 England's Seven Years' War acquisition
22 Royal residence
23 Bring brunch
24 Opens stoppages
27 Cipher code
30 On the wagon
34 Aesop's loser
35 Corset cord
36 Swabble's wave
37 Gray wolves
38 Goes wrong
39 Like Nestor
40 Elvis __ Presley
41 Bunk
42 One off the wagon
43 Add water
45 Stackable snacks
47 Unbroken
52 Inhabitant of ancient Crete
54 Summit
56 John Jacob or Mary
57 Carolina smoked entree?
58 Takes by theft
59 __ mater
60 Stately display
61 Sound judgment
62 Dog tired
63 Fair

DOWN
1 Drink like a cat
2 Actress Verdugo
3 Coral reef
4 Andrea, the dictator of Genoa
5 Come alive
6 Take on
7 Like Death Valley
8 Actress Arthur
9 Conspicuous successes
10 Unchanging intonation
11 New Jersey haven?
12 Copied
13 Blood parts
18 Sustain
21 Kennel units
23 Light circle
25 Multi-tone harmonies
26 Blair's party
28 Buff color
29 Old affirmative
30 Adages
31 Buckeye State
32 Massachusetts heavy weight?
33 Look and see
35 Actor Gorcey
37 Strike repeatedly
41 Coloring agent
43 Mortician's vehicle
44 Helmet
46 Chambers
48 Packs down
49 Sneeze sound
50 Quahogs
51 Relative speed
52 Time and Life, briefly
53 Guernsey or Anglesey
54 Whimper
55 "__ la Douce"
57 Pat lightly

Monday's Puzzle Solved

A	N	G	L	O	■	M	A	L	T	■	M	E	S	A
L	O	R	E	N	■	U	V	E	A	■	O	P	E	N
P	R	A	I	S	E	T	O	T	H	E	H	I	L	T
H	M	S	■	C	R	A	W	■	O	R	A	C	L	E
A	S	P	I	R	I	N	■	M	E	O	W	■	■	■
■	■	■	N	E	T	T	L	E	■	S	K	I	M	P
S	P	A	D	E	R	■	E	A	R	■	■	R	E	O
T	A	X	O	N	E	S	E	N	E	R	G	I	E	S
Y	U	L	■	■	A	N	D	■	F	E	I	S	T	Y
E	L	E	G	Y	■	U	S	U	R	P	S	■	■	■
■	■	■	R	A	N	G	■	S	E	E	H	E	R	E
A	R	C	A	N	E	■	N	A	S	A	■	L	I	D
G	O	L	I	K	E	L	I	G	H	T	N	I	N	G
E	T	O	N	■	D	I	N	E	■	E	R	O	S	E
S	E	T	S	■	Y	E	A	S	■	R	A	T	E	D

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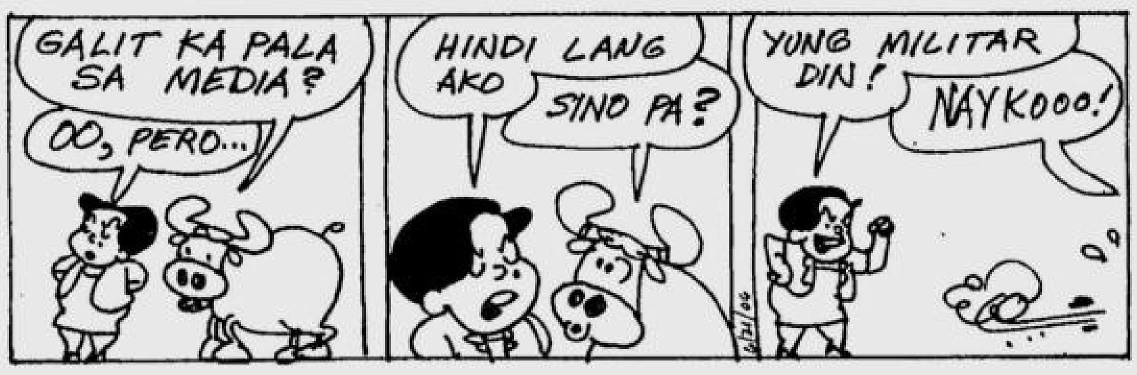
3/21/06

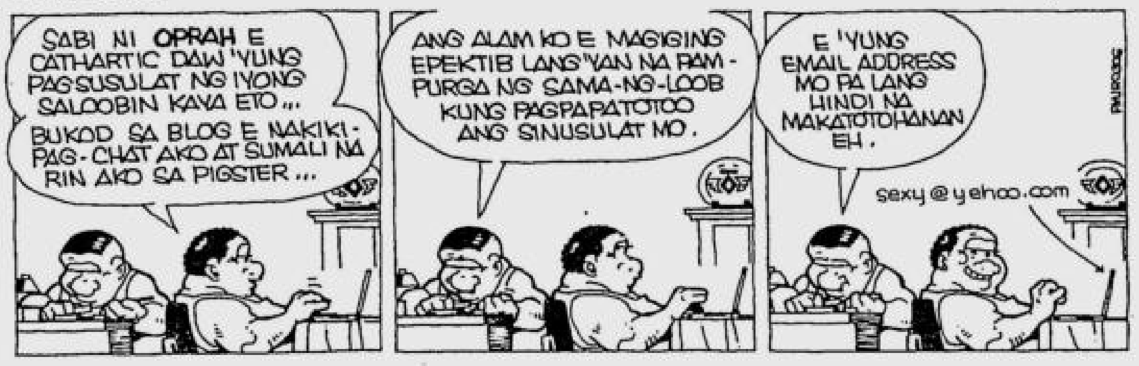
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


GALIT KA PALA SA MEDIA?
OO, PERO...
HINDI LANG AKO
SINO PA?
YUNG MILITAR DIN!
NAYKOOO!

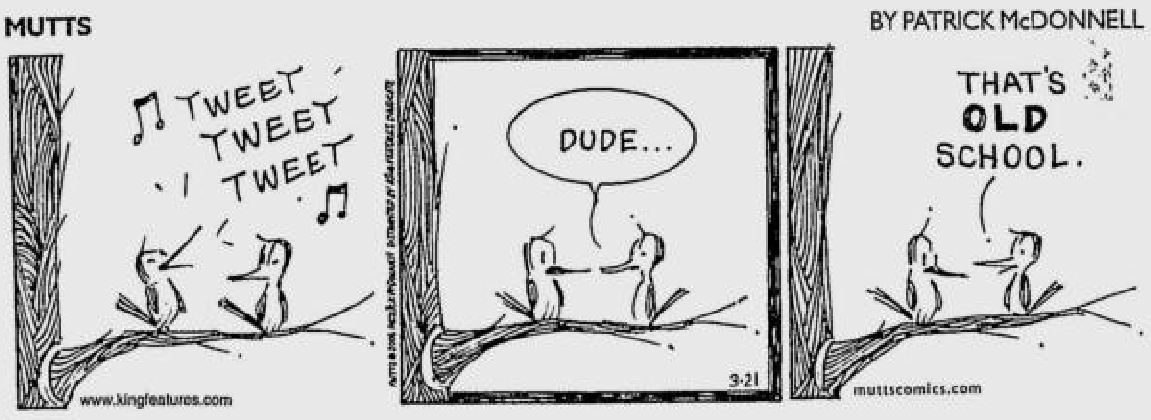
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SABI NI OPRAH E CATHARTIC DAW 'YUNG PAGSUSULAT NG IYONG SALOOBIN KAYA ETO...
BUKOD SA BLOG E NAKIKI-PAG-CHAT AKO AT SUMALI NA RIN AKO SA PIGSTER ...
ANG ALAM KO E MAGIGING EPEKTIB LANG 'YAN NA PAMPURGA NG SAMA-NG-LOOB KUNG PAGPAPATOTOO ANG SINUSULAT MO.
E 'YUNG EMAIL ADDRESS MO PA LANG HINDI NA MAKATOTOHANAN EH.
sexy@yehoo.com

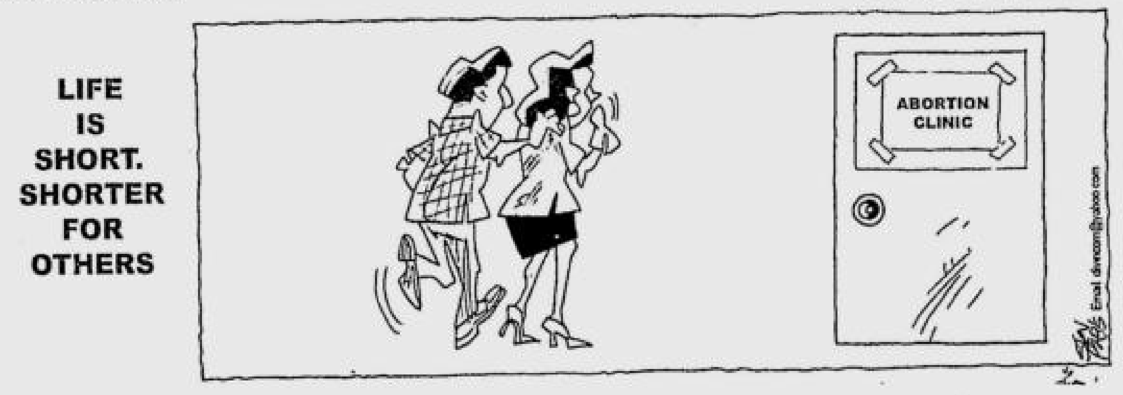
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


TWEET TWEET TWEET
DUDE...
THAT'S OLD SCHOOL.
3-21
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com

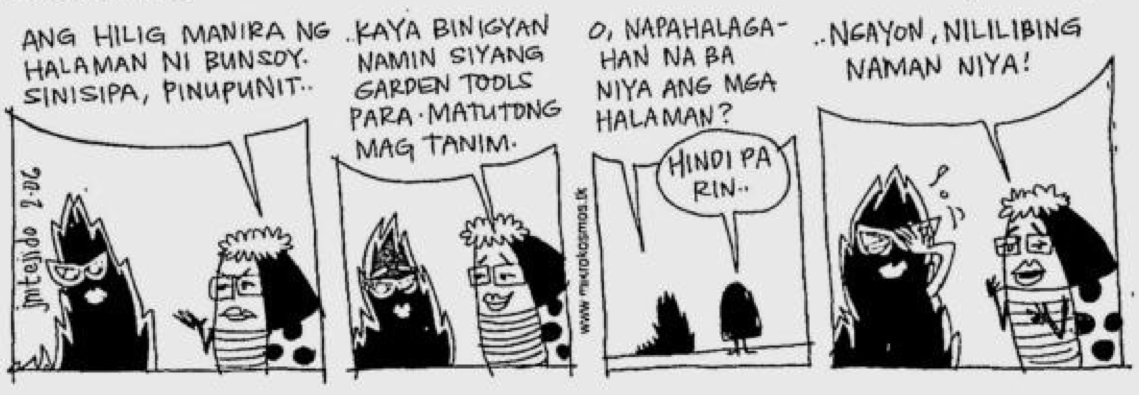
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


LIFE IS SHORT. SHORTER FOR OTHERS
ABORTION CLINIC

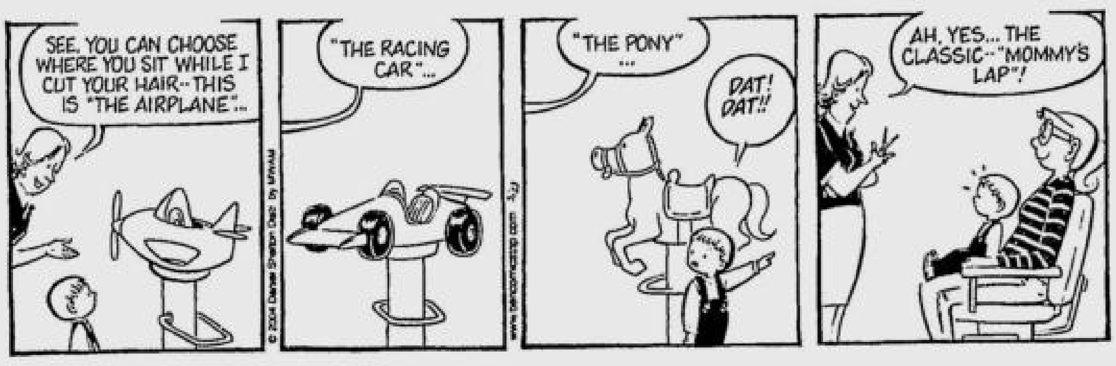
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG HILIG MANIRA NG HALAMAN NI BUNSOY. SINISIPA, PINUPUNIT..
..KAYA BINIGYAN NAMIN SIYANG GARDEN TOOLS PARA MATUTONG MAG TANIM.
O, NAPAHALAGAHAN NA BA NIYA ANG MGA HALAMAN?
HINDI PA RIN..
..NGAYON, NILILIBING NAMAN NIYA!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

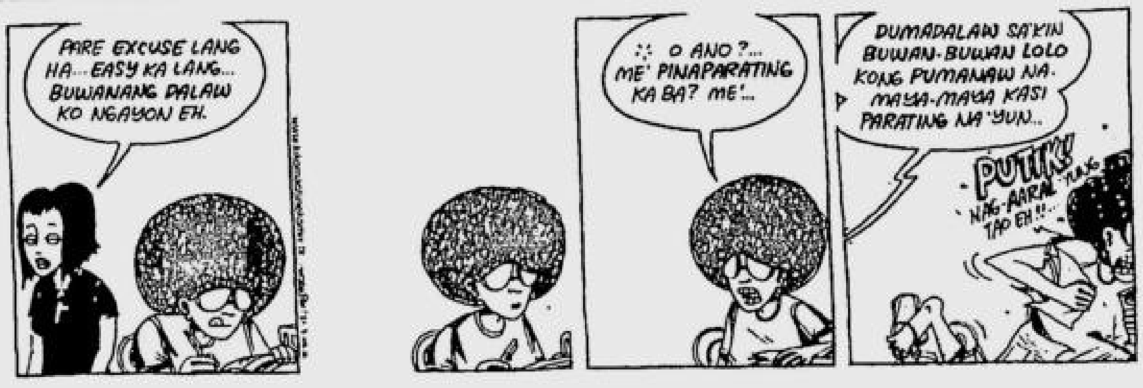
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SEE, YOU CAN CHOOSE WHERE YOU SIT WHILE I CUT YOUR HAIR--THIS IS "THE AIRPLANE"...
"THE RACING CAR"...
"THE PONY" ...
DAT! DAT!!
AH, YES... THE CLASSIC--"MOMMY'S LAP"!

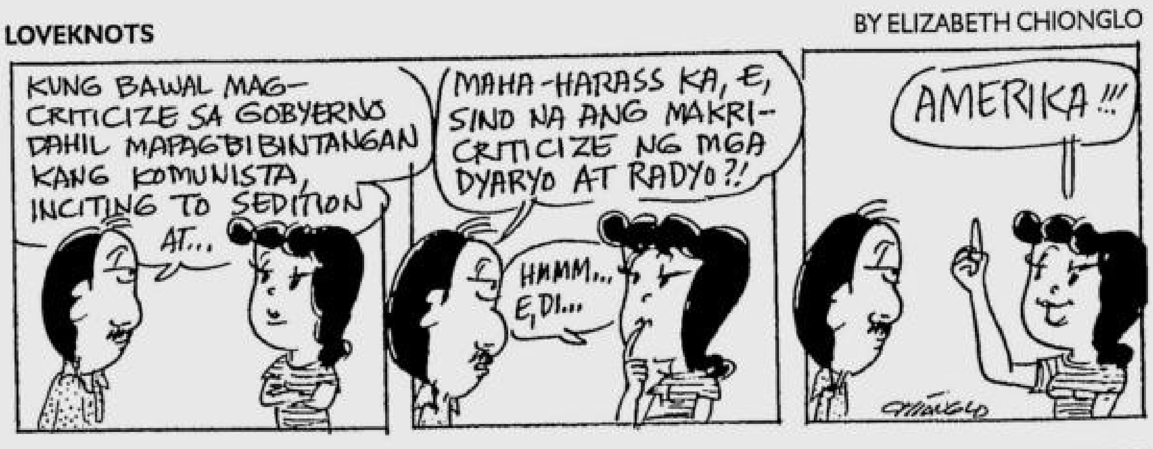
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


PARE EXCUSE LANG HA... EASY KA LANG... BUWANANG DALAW KO NGAYON EH.
O ANO?... ME' PINAPARATING KA BA? ME'...
DUMADALAW SA'KIN BUWAN-BUWAN LOLO KONG PUMANAW NA. MAYA-MAYA KASI PARATING NA 'YUN..
PUTIK! NAG-AARAL TAYO EH!!..

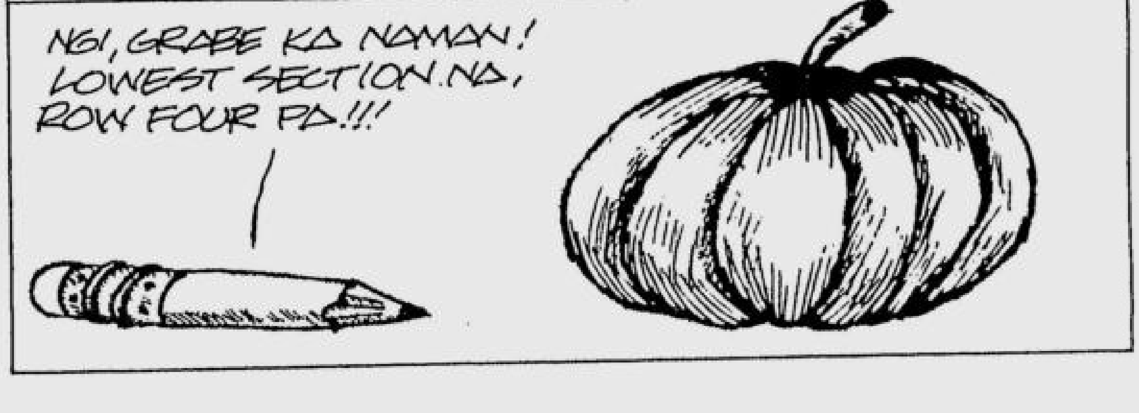
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


KUNG BAWAL MAG-CRITICIZE SA GOBYERNO DAHIL MAPAGBIBINTANGAN KANG KOMUNISTA, INCITING TO SEDITION AT...
MAHA-HARASS KA, E, SINO NA ANG MAKRI-CRITICIZE NG MGA DYARYO AT RADYO?!
HMMM... E, DI...
AMERIKA!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NGI, GRABE KA NAMAN! LOWEST SECTION NA, ROW FOUR PA!!!

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

'No, I didn't!'

By Marinel R. Cruz

BIANCA King

"I WOULDN'T YELL AT ANYONE JUST BEcause I got booted out of a game show. My parents did not raise me to behave that way."

Actress and commercial model Bianca King was reacting to tabloid news that she screamed at the studio audience and walked out of the set of QTV's game show "Now Na."

Bianca said she found it odd that the news surfaced only recently, when the supposed "Now Na" episode was taped two months ago. Reports published two weeks ago said the actress got irked when the studio audience chose her from among four contestants to get the boot.

"I'm not *mataray*," Bianca told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview on Fri-

NO/ A2-2

How to sell our movies abroad

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

BEFORE WE CAN SELL our movies abroad, Filipino producers should change the work system in the film industry.

This is the opinion of Ma. Azucena "Manay Ichu" Maceda, outgoing chair of the International Film Festival Committee (Iffcom).

"For instance," Maceda told INQUIRER Entertainment, "a foreign buyer normally asks a local producer for two or three separate sound tracks—for the dialogue and music and/or effects. Most local films' dialogue is recorded on one side [of the sound negative] and on the other, the music. How can you sell if the product is defective?"

Still in mono

Tony Gloria, president of Unitel Pictures, confirmed this. "Foreign distributors require separate tracks so they can dub Tagalog films in their own language."

"If the dialogue and music/effects tracks are combined, you lose the music and effects when you redub the dialogue," said Dodie Lucas, managing director of the post-production firm Roadrunner.

"Sound technology has grown by leaps and bounds," Maceda noted, "but most local movies are still in mono."

Lucas explained that the problem was economic. "It's difficult to be a producer in the Philippines," Lucas said. "My hats off to Regal and Star Cinema for continuing to produce films against all odds."

He explained that numerous prerequisites for a local producer to sell abroad—from securing copyright permits to acquiring mint masters—all require money.

Also, technological improve-

HOW/ A2-2

Ties that bind Piolo and mom

By Nini Valera

AMELIA PASCUAL TENDS TO chat up every pretty girl she meets, and then drags her youngest son J to meet her.

"If I could, I would be distributing copies of my son's bio-data in the United States—one for every potential girlfriend," said Amy. "That's how much I want to see him get married. I even talk to flight attendants and get them interested in meeting my son."

People might think Amy crazy for playing cupid to her son, who happens to be heartthrob Piolo Pascual. J is her pet name for him.

"That's the irony," she said. "He's Piolo Pascual—you'd think he could get any girl he fancied. But that's not the case. He does not want just any girl."

Piolo was amused at his mom's declarations to INQUIRER Entertainment in an interview last week. Amy is based in the US.

Earlier, Piolo, who turned 29 last January, admitted that he was looking for a girl to settle down with. He thought it could be Toni Gonzaga.

"[But] I'd like her to develop as herself first ... then we'll see," the actor said.

A few years back, Pops Fernandez admitted she was dating him.

It's a tough act for a girl to get into the groove with Piolo—even tougher when you bring Mom Amy into the equation.

"He still sleeps in my bed when we're together," revealed Amy.

TIES/ A2-2

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16 BLOCKS PG13 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,9:50	HOSTEL R18 1:45,3:55,6:05,8:15	V FOR VENDETTA R13 1:50,4:40,7:30,10:20

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1 SHAGGY DOG
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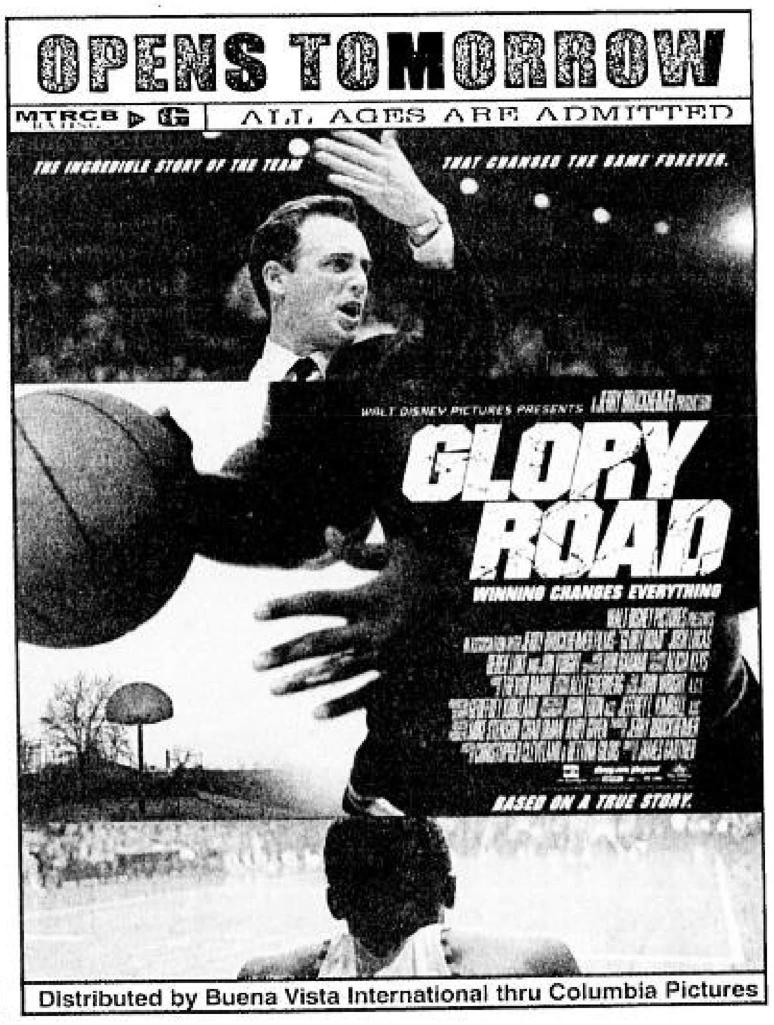
GP

2 V FOR VENDETTA
11:20, 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:00
R-13

3 SHE'S THE MAN
12:35, 3:05, 5:35, 8:05, 10:35
PG-13

4 HOSTEL
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
R-18



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MTRCB R-18
12.40, 3.00, 5.20

② SHAGGY DOG
MTRCB GP
12.20, 2.45, 5.10, 7.35, 10.00 LMF

③ SHE'S THE MAN
MTRCB PG-13
2.00, 4.25, 6.50, 9.15

④ V FOR VENDETTA
MTRCB R-13
1.00, 4.00, 7.00, 10.00 LMF

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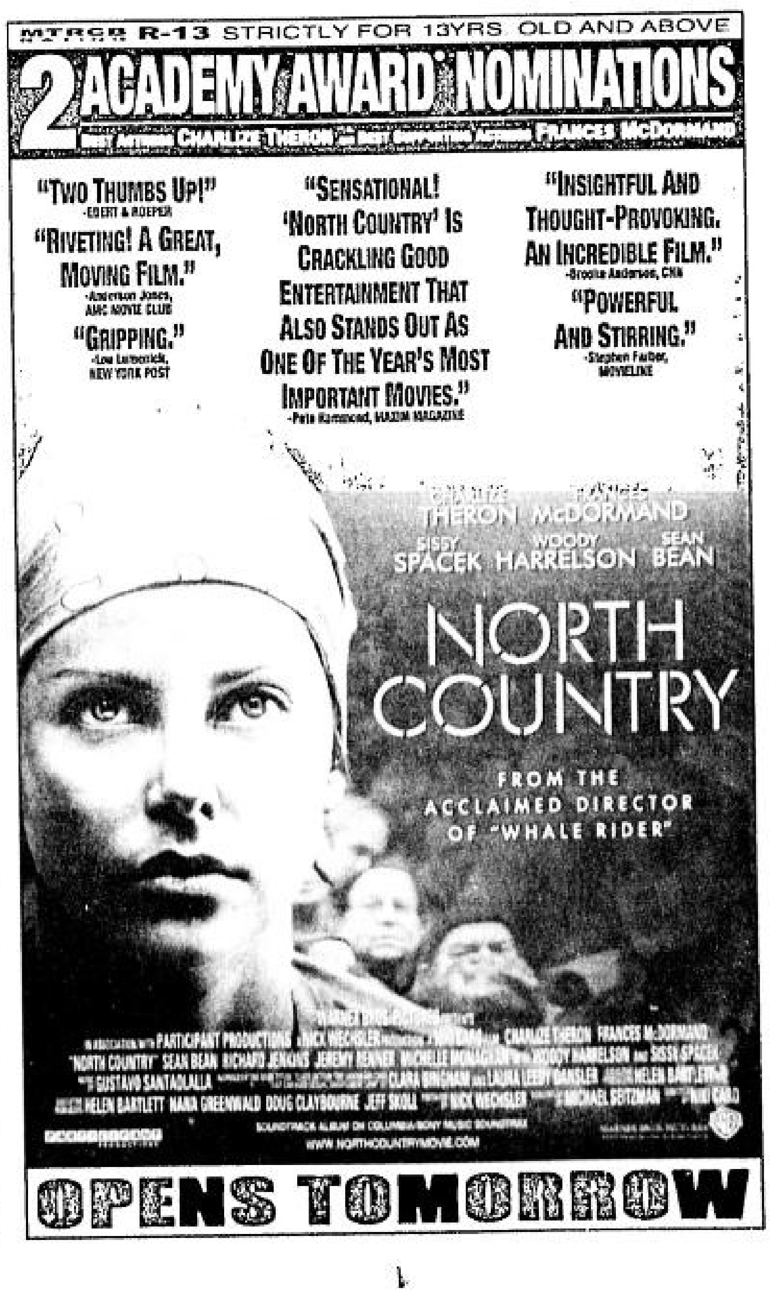

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CINEMA 3 SHE'S THE MAN 11:35, 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20 PG13
CINEMA 4 SHAGGY DOG 10:40, 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20 GP
CINEMA 5 V FOR VENDETTA 11:15, 2:05, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30 R13

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MUSIC MUSEUM

MARCH 30, 2006	RICO J. PUNO	9:00PM
MARCH 31, 2006	RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO	8:00PM

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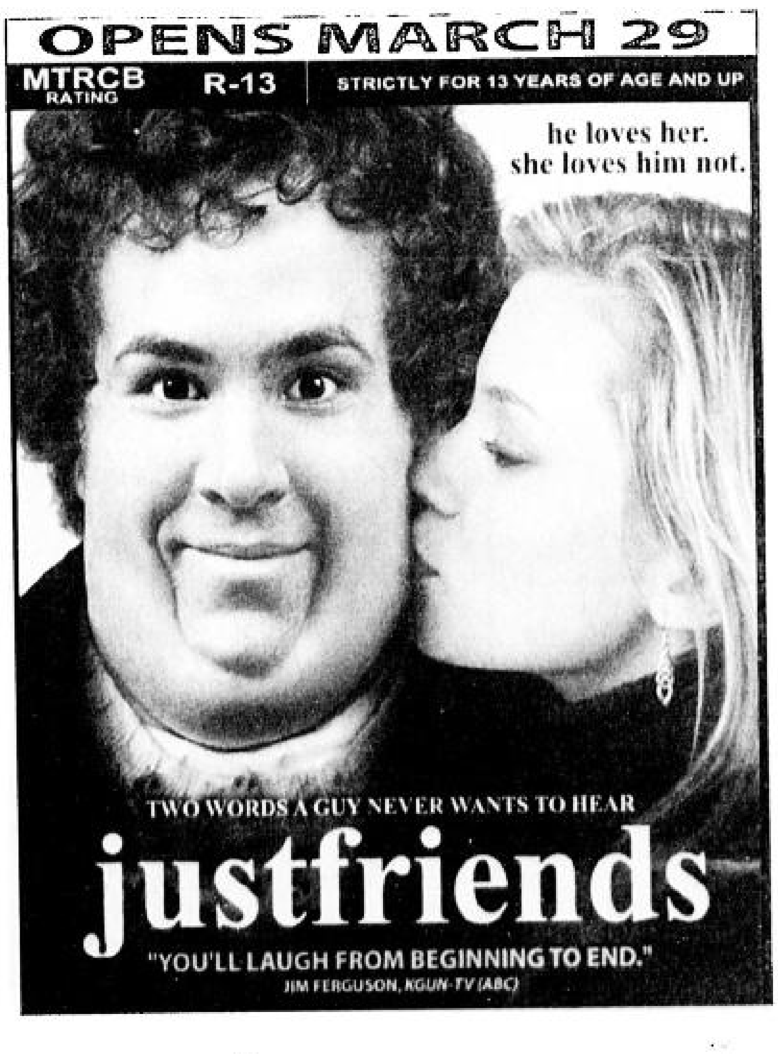

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she loves him not.
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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 CASANOVA • THX
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

6 SHE'S THE MAN
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

2 V FOR VENDETTA
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

7 DATE MOVIE
1:20 3:25 5:30 7:35 9:45

3 HOUSE OF FURY
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

8 BROKEBACK MOUNATIN
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

4 SHAGGY DOG
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

9 16 BLOCKS
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 HOSTEL
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

10 THE DARK
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 V FOR VENDETTA 10:10 12:35 3:40 6:40 9:50

2 THE DARK 10:10 12:20 2:30
16 BLOCKS 4:30 6:20 8:10 10:00

5 HOSTEL
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 SHE'S THE MAN
10:10 12.30 2.50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 SHAGGY DOG
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

4 HOUSE OF FURY
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9.50

7 DATE MOVIE
10.40 12:20 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE DARK
12.50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

5 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
1:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

2 V FOR VENDETTA
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

6 SHAGGY DOG
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

3 HOSTEL
11:45 2:05 4:25 6:45 9:05

7 16 BLOCKS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

4 DATE MOVIE
12:15 2:00 3:45 5:30 7:15 9:00

8 SHE'S THE MAN
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 SHAGGY DOG
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
4 HOSTEL
5 HOUSE OF FURY

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 FEARLESS
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-6378

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 SHAGGY DOG

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MTRCB Rating: R-18

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2 HOSTEL
3 TIGER BLADE
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1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 HOSTEL
3 YOURS, MINE AND OURS
4 AEON FLUX

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1 CASANOVA
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
3 HOSTEL
4 V FOR VENDETTA

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 MURDER
4 AEON FLUX

IMUS (046) 875-3836 (046) 471-6166

1 CASANOVA
2 HOSTEL
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 LAST HOLIDAY
6 TIGER BLADE

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-6270

1 16 BLOCKS
2 HOSTEL
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
5 CASANOVA
6 V FOR VENDETTA

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 NEW WORLD
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
5 MURDER
6 FEARLESS

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1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 16 BLOCKS
3 CASANOVA
4 HOSTEL
5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
6 FEARLESS

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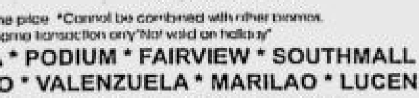
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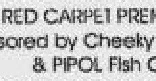

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THE PODIUM CINEMA

V FOR VENDETTA
12:30 FS / 12:50 MF / 03:30
06:10 / 08:25 LFS
08:50 LMF / 11:05 END

SHAGGY DOG
01:40 FS / 02:10 MF / 04:25
06:40 / 8:15LFS
09:00 LMF / 10:45 END

SM MEGACINEMA

1 BREAKING NEWS
12:00FS / 12:30 MF
02:30 / 04:00LFS
04:30 LMF / 06:00 END
2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 THE DARK
4 RENOVATION
5 THE DARK
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 FEARLESS
8 SHAGGY DOG
9 16 BLOCKS
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 CASANOVA
12 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 FEARLESS
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 RESERVED
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 HOUSE OF FURY
7 FINAL DESTINATION 3
8 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 CASANOVA
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 AEON FLUX

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 BREAKING NEWS
2 THE DARK
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 16 BLOCKS
5 FINAL DESTINATION 3
6 FEARLESS
7 V FOR VENDETTA
8 SHAGGY DOG
9 SHE'S THE MAN
10 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
11 UNDERCLASS MAN
12 HOUSE OF FURY

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 16 BLOCKS
4 SHE'S THE MAN
5 FEARLESS
6 THE DARK
7 FINAL DESTINATION 3
8 HOUSE OF FURY
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 CASANOVA

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 CASANOVA
3 THE DARK
4 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 16 BLOCKS
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 SHE'S THE MAN

SM CITY MANILA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 UNDERCLASS MAN
4 FEARLESS
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 16 BLOCKS
7 BREAKING NEWS
8 THE DARK
9 FINAL DESTINATION 3
10 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
11 CLOSE TO YOU
12 HOUSE OF FURY

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 FEARLESS
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 16 BLOCKS
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 UNDERCLASS MAN
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9 THE DARK
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 16 BLOCKS
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4 THE DARK

SM CITY SUCAT

1 SHAGGY DOG
2 V FOR VENDETTA
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LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO

1 NEW WORLD
2 CASANOVA
3 YOURS, MINE & OURS
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY MARILAO

1 CASANOVA
2 SYRIANA
3 16 BLOCKS
4 YOURS, MINE & OURS

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 YOURS, MINE & OURS
2 PRIME
3 FEARLESS
4 SYRIANA

SM CITY BACOOR

1 THE DARK
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3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 FEARLESS
8 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 LAST HOLIDAY
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 AEON FLUX
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 CASANOVA
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 FEARLESS
6 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY LUCENA

1 FEARLESS
2 YOURS, MINE & OURS
3 SAW 2
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

SM CITY MOLINO

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 THE DARK
3 YOURS, MINE & OURS
4 FEARLESS

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4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
5 GOAL
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5 V FOR VENDETTA
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SM CITY DAVAO

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2 FEARLESS
3 FIREWALL
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 AEON FLUX
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SM CITY CAGAYAN

1 SYRIANA
2 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
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It also has compet
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Carmen Elektra (for projec
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tertainment value).

Each week, eight good d
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From page A2-1

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"I didn't think he was serious," she recalled. But Piolo had insisted, saying that they had a deal for a TV commercial—together.

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Bianca turned 20 on March 18. She celebrated by

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 CASANOVA • THX 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 V FOR VENDETTA 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
3 HOUSE OF FURY 1.20 3:30 5:40 7.50 10:00
4 SHAGGY DOG 1:10 3:20 5.30 7:40 9:50
5 HOSTEL 11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
6 SHE'S THE MAN 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
7 DATE MOVIE 1:20 3:25 5:30 7:35 9:45
8 BROKEBACK MOUNATIN 1:30 4:20 7:10 10.00
9 16 BLOCKS 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
10 THE DARK 1:10 3.20 5:30 7:40 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 V FOR VENDETTA 10:10 12:35 3:40 6:40 9:50
2 THE DARK 10:10 12:20 2:30
16 BLOCKS 4:30 6:20 8:10 10:00
3 SHE'S THE MAN 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
4 HOUSE OF FURY 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9.50
5 HOSTEL 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
6 SHAGGY DOG 11:00 1.00 3.00 5:00 7:00 9:00
7 DATE MOVIE 10:40 12:20 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE DARK 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9.00
2 V FOR VENDETTA 12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00
3 HOSTEL 11:45 2.05 4:25 6:45 9:05
4 DATE MOVIE 12:15 2:00 3.45 5:30 7:15 9:00
5 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE 1:00 3.00 6:00 9 00
6 SHAGGY DOG 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
7 16 BLOCKS 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
8 SHE'S THE MAN 11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 SHAGGY DOG
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
4 HOSTEL
5 HOUSE OF FURY

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2576

1 FEARLESS
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 SHAGGY DOG

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RYAN EIGENMANN AVI SIWA
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The film draws answers from the urban legends that grew around the controversial sex videos and the result is a humurous narrative with elements of mock documentary. Leo is a 21-year old co-ed student in a prestigious college. He dreams of making and starring in his own "dirty movie" and becomes obsessed with the idea. Leo eggs her girlfriend Claire to be part of the video. She hesitates but gives in to the idea soon enough, when she finds her most compelling reason in the person of a sexy girl named Miles.

Opens MARCH 22
MTRCB Rating: R-18

upclose and personal with JENNIFER LEE
Cinema Lobby
MARCH 22 Ermita 2PM; Galleria 4PM; Metro East 6PM
MARCH 25 Metro East 2PM; Galleria 4PM; Ermita 6PM

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1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 TIGER BLADE
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
5 AEON FLUX

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 HOSTEL
3 YOURS, MINE AND OURS
4 AEON FLUX

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 CASANOVA
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
3 HOSTEL
4 V FOR VENDETTA

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 MURDER
4 AEON FLUX

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 CASANOVA
2 HOSTEL
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 LAST HOLIDAY
6 TIGER BLADE

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

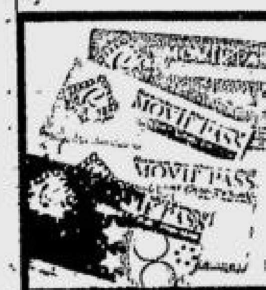
1 16 BLOCKS
2 HOSTEL
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
5 CASANOVA
6 V FOR VENDETTA

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 NEW WORLD
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
5 MURDER
6 FEARLESS

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 16 BLOCKS
3 CASANOVA
4 HOSTEL
5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
6 FEARLESS



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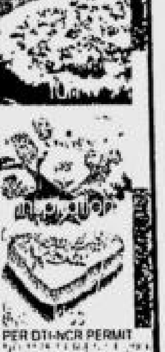

MEGAMALL * STA. MESA * MANILA * PODIUM * FAIRVIEW * SOUTHMALL
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06:10 / 08:25 LFS
08:50 LMF / 11:05 END
SHAGGY DOG
01:40 FS / 02:10 MF / 04:25
06:40 / 8:15LFS
09:00 LMF / 10:45 END

SM MEGACINEMA
BREAKING NEWS
12:00FS / 12:30 MF
02:30 / 04:00LFS
04:30 LMF / 06:00 END
2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 THE DARK
4 RENOVATION
5 THE DARK
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 FEARLESS
8 SHAGGY DOG
9 16 BLOCKS
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 CASANOVA
12 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 FEARLESS
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 RESERVED
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 HOUSE OF FURY
7 FINAL DESTINATION 3
8 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 CASANOVA
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 AEON FLUX

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 BREAKING NEWS
2 THE DARK
3 CLOSE TO YOU
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9 SHE'S THE MAN
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11 UNDERCLASS MAN
12 HOUSE OF FURY

SM CITY STA. MESA
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10 CASANOVA

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 CASANOVA
3 THE DARK
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SM CITY SAN LAZARO
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5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 SHE'S THE MAN

SM CITY MANILA
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2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 AEON FLUX
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY PAMPANGA
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SM CITY LUCENA
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Bianca turned 20 on March 18. She celebrated by

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‘Dance Fever’ sizzles on ABC-5

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

in the dance contest's finals.

What makes "Dance Fever" eminently viewable and exciting is the high level of dancing exhibited by most of its contestants. The diversity in their dancing styles is also impressive.

We like the fact that the jurors don't sadistically cut up the contestants with inordinately harsh comments. Instead, they share truly helpful notes that show the contestants how to improve their performances.

Last March 5, however, most of the jurors comments were complimentary, because most of the contestants did competent work.

The winner in the first group was All That, a four-man tap dancing team that garnered raves from the jurors. In the second group, the victor was a male-female salsa team that pulled off an amazingly difficult routine with great skill and panache.

Which one would the judges tap as the week's champion? It was a really tough choice.

In fact, we hoped that the jurors would declare a tie, because the two teams were both so outstanding. However, they chose to go for All That. But the salsa duo still has a chance to enter the finals, by way of the show's "wild card" option.

The show's first batch of contestants was so good that we wonder if it can keep up this high level of competition from week to week. We'll be watching the show regularly from here on in, so we'll keep you posted. Better still, watch the show yourselves, so it can work its dance magic on you, as well.

'Tuloy Pa Rin ang Awit'

JOLINA Magdangal is back with her second album for GMA Records, aptly titled "Tuloy Pa Rin ang Awit." The album is greatly influenced by new collaborators and producers, but the tracks were chosen by Jolina herself, a first for her.

The title track is the theme of the Asianovela "Beautiful Days." For its part, the carrier single, "Maybe It's You," is the theme of another Asianovela, "My Name Is Kim Sam" soon.

Other tracks include "Better Off This Way," "Gusto," "Akin," "You Belong To My Heart," "Nagmamahal Ka Na" and "Whenever You Call." The album also includes a bonus music video of "Maybe It's You."

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PIOLO Pascual with his mom Amelia

tures for Selecta Ice Cream ads and also did a TV commercial. The camera-shy Amy cringed with each take.

Even so, Piolo declared, "My mother is a natural."

ell . . .

needed to help local producers locate buyers.

Gloria agreed: "Film festivals are important because that's where our movies will win awards and get good reviews from foreign critics, but we also have to be present in film markets where movies are bought and sold."

In the past, Unitel has set up booths at the Cannes and American Film Markets. For the first time this year, it's present at the Hong Kong Filmart, ongoing until March 23.

n...

From page A2-4

ods. By a mysterious twist of fate, Divina (**Iza Calzado**) who lives in 1957 and Marco (**Dingdong Dantes**) who lives in the present, meet and fall in love. The movie will also be released internationally.

When it comes to *l'amour*, we don't remember days but moments. Moments we can no longer relive yet try to recapture. Let the movie say the rest.

Bolton in Manila!

Grammy award winner **Michael Bolton** is coming to Manila for a one-night only concert on March 29 at the Araneta Coliseum! I wonder if he will bring along his ladylove **Nicolette Sheridan** ("Desperate Housewives")?

Call 911-5555.

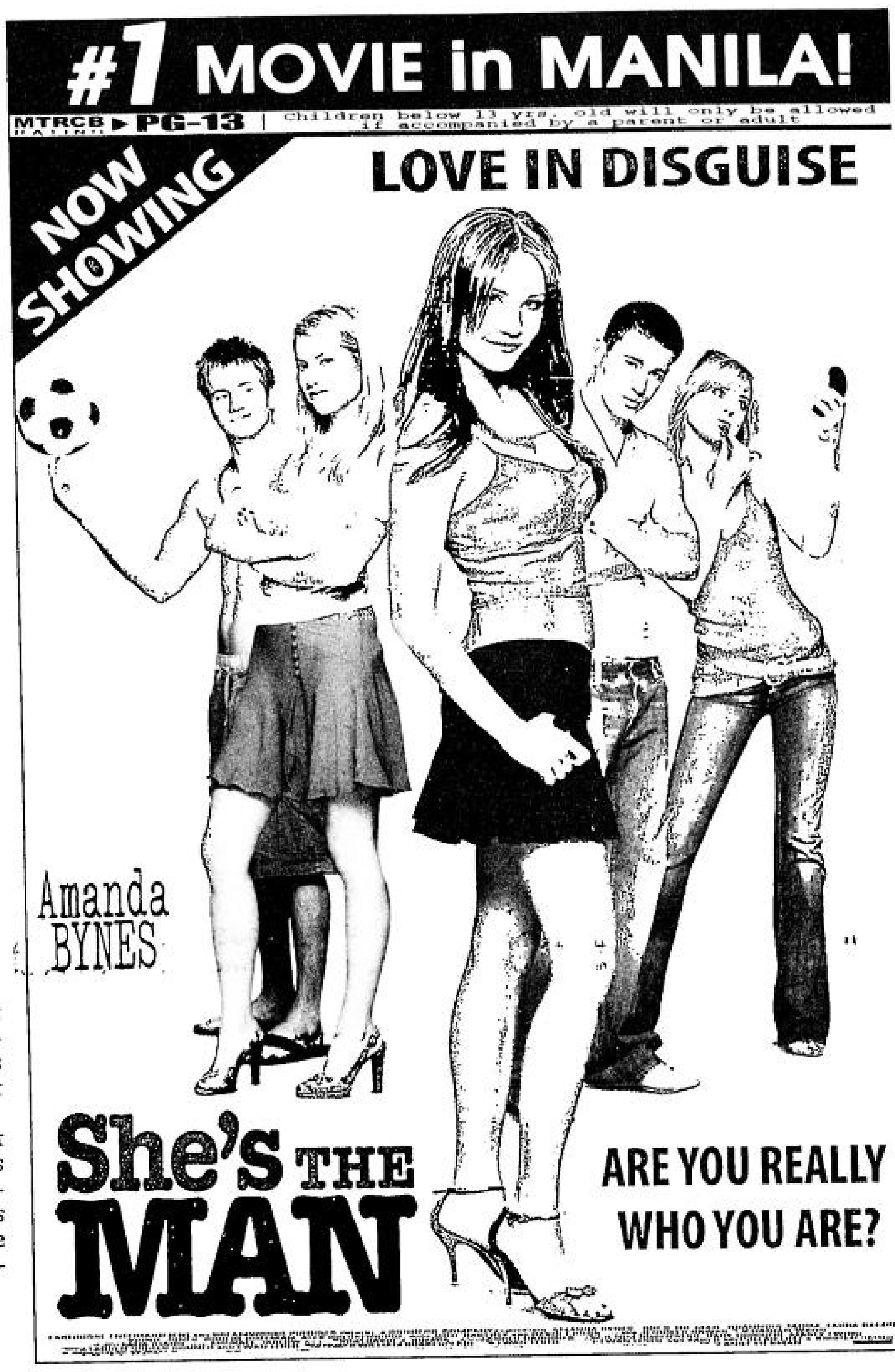
(E-Mail wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com.)

From page A2-1

joining Ruffa Gutierrez and other show biz celebrities in a fund-raiser for the survivors of the recent killer mudslide in Southern Leyte. Ruffa had organized the daylong "Celebrity Tiangge for Leyte" at the Market! Market! in Taguig City.

On the same day, Bianca also took the entrance exam for an arts management college course. "I'm setting my priorities— I'm going back to school. But I'm not entirely leaving show biz."

Bianca was last seen in "Mulawin, The Movie." Starting March 26, she will be on the teen program "Love to Love," season 10.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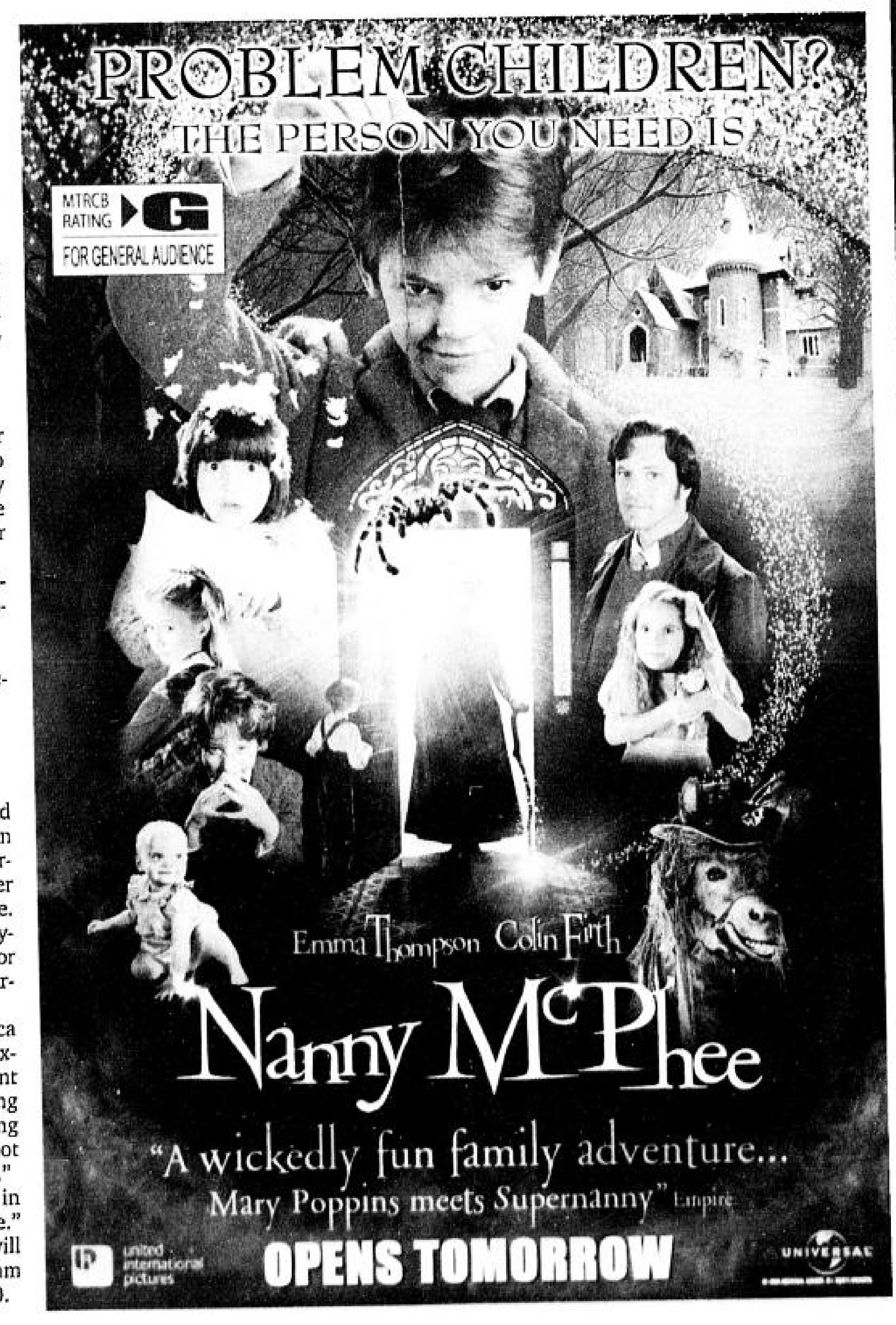
She's THE MAN
ARE YOU REALLY WHO YOU ARE?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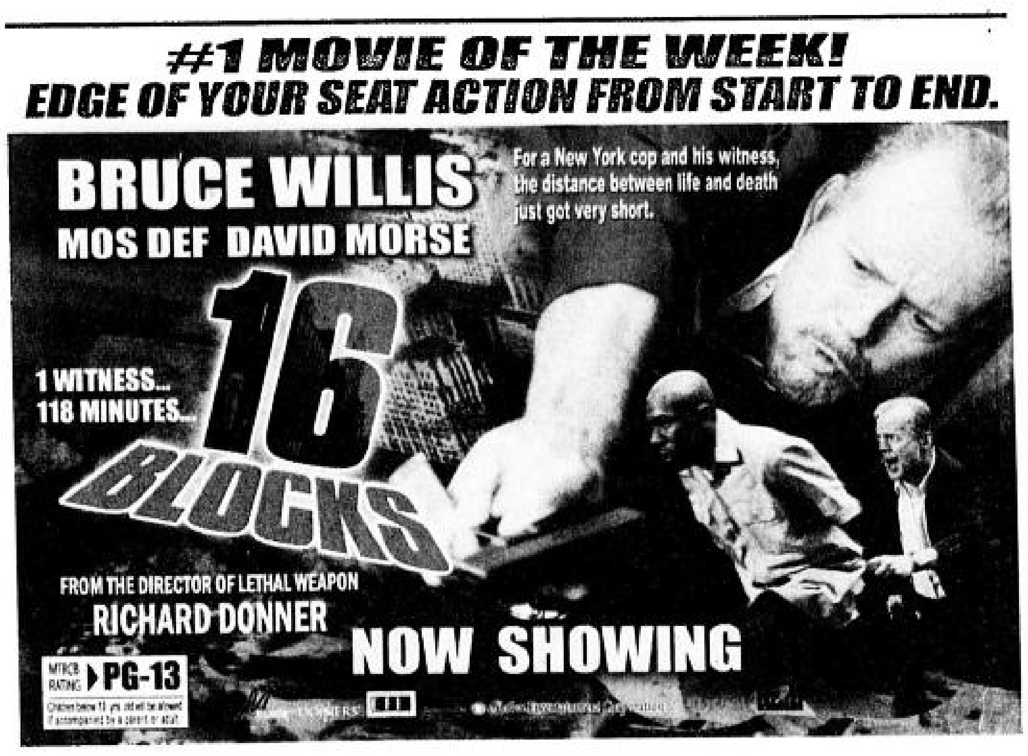
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EDGE OF YOUR SEAT ACTION FROM START TO END.
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2 (DOLBY) SHAGGY DOG GP
3 (DOLBY) SHE'S THE MAN PG13
4 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA R13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) 16 BLOCKS / HOSTEL PG13 / R18

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1 (DDS) YOURS MINE & OURS
2 (SDDS) FINAL DESTINATION
3 (DTS) DATE MOVIE
4 GOLD (DTS) HOSTEL
5 GOLD (DOLBY) SHE'S THE MAN
6 GOLD (SDDS) SHAGGY DOG
7 GOLD (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
8 (DOLBY STEREO) FEARLESS
9 (DOLBY STEREO) HOUSE OF FURY
10 (DOLBY STEREO) 16 BLOCKS

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2 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
3 (DOLBY) SHE'S THE MAN
4 (DOLBY) HOSTEL

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
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2 SHAGGY DOG - GP
3 YOURS MINE & OURS - GP
4 HOSTEL - R18

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 HOSTEL
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
5 HOUSE OF FURY

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 THE DARK
2 FEARLESS
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 HOSTEL

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3 BLOODRAYNE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel. (042) 660-5271
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★ BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
★ RESERVED
★ RESERVED

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) SHAGGY DOG
2 (DOLBY) HOSTEL
3 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN
4 FEARLESS
5 HOSTEL

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2 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN
3 TIGER BLADE
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
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2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN

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1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 (DTS ES) AEON FLUX
4 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
2 FEARLESS
3 (DOLBY) SYRIANA
4 (DTS) CLOSE TO YOU

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1 SAW-2
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

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1 THE NEW WORLD
2 (DTS) AEON FLUX
3 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
4 HOSTEL

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(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
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4 TIGER BLADE

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(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
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3 (DOLBY) AEON FLUX

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(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 CRY WOLF
2 YOURS MINE & OURS
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Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 HOSTEL
2 16 BLOCKS
3 (DOLBY) DATE MOVIE / SYRIANA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
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2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 FEARLESS
2 DISKARTE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) SEX & ZEN
2 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN
3 DAYO
4 (DTS) VISIBLE SECRET-1

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
2 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN
3 (DTS) HOSTEL
4 THE NEW WORLD
5 AEON FLUX

Fiesta World Mall
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1 AEON FLUX
2 HOSTEL
3 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
4 YOURS MINE & OURS

Berma Cinema
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1 BLOODRAYNE
2 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN

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To roam in Rome

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

STAR FOR ALL SEASONS **VILMA SANTOS** IS en route to Rome with her hubby Senator **Ralph Recto**. They were invited to attend the ordination of **Cardinal Rosales**. The couple plan to extend their stay and spend Holy Week in the Vatican. I teased **Ate Vi**: "So it's gonna be your nth honeymoon with **Ralph**?" She giggled, *"Pwede rin!"* It will surely be Rome sweet Rome for them!

Pinoy Big Mother

Heard that ex-housemate **Franzen Fajardo** had the audacity to ask for talent fee when he was requested to attend the wake of one of the Ultra tragedy victims. He denied this, but his mom confirmed it. Is it true there's a gap between mother and son? Insiders claim that since **Franzen** became popular after "Pinoy Big Brother," he hasn't been giving his mom a fair share of his earnings. That's why the mom has been squealing on him. Since PBB is a reality show, I am confused: Is **Franzen**'s behavior a case of life imitating art or art imitating life?

Guess who this mother of a separated actress is! She laments, "I shouldn't have introduced my daughter to a band member who's her boyfriend now. At her age, she deserves somebody more stable." Show biz watchers insist that the actress herself is not exactly stable, especially in the emotional/mental department. When she harps about her failed marriage on TV, it's like she's delivering a soliloquy. It seems that, for her, love is not the answer but the one always in question.

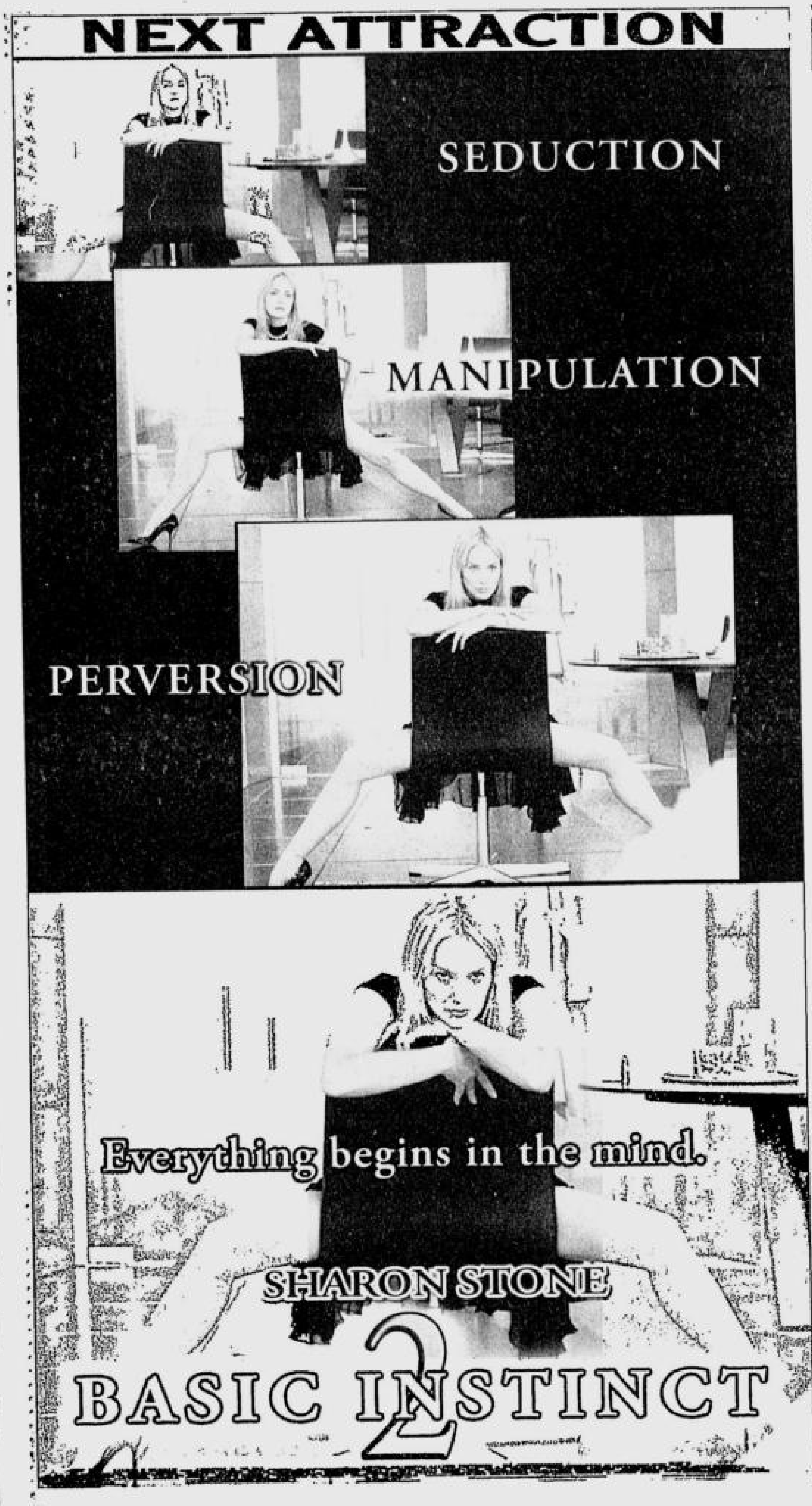
CLUE: The actress' ex-husband is in show biz, too.

Delightful couple

I had a blast hanging out with **Romnick Sarmenta** and **Harlene Bautista** at their cool, laid-back Kafebaresto (40-A T. Gener St. cor. Kamuning Rd. QC). I couldn't have enough of their *liempo* with mango-peanut sauce and *Bistek* Bautista. With me were **Daria Ramirez**, her daughter **Chenee** and my fave *fashionista*, **Tita Bebot Santos** (stars flock to her shop, Kolorete, at 67 Timog Arcade Scout Torillo St. for signature items without the pricey tags). While **Nicko** manned the bar downstairs, **Harlene** put their four-month old baby girl to sleep. What a delight to see a show biz couple conducting both their business and parenting chores hands-on! Their amazing love story is something I never get tired of listening to. After many twist and turns, they found their way back to each other.

Harlene said, beaming, "We never really split up. Circumstances just kept us apart. Imagine, we've been together 20 years!" Their baby

TO ROAM/ A2-2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SHARON STONE
BASIC INSTINCT 2

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BREAKING NEWS 12:40 / 2:45	HOSTEL 1:20 / 3:25 / 5:30 / 7:35 / 9:40	V FOR VENDETTA 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
HOUSE OF FURY 5:20 / 7:25 / 9:30	YOURS, MINE & OURS 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30	SHAGGY DOG 12:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40	V FOR VENDETTA 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00
SHE'S THE MAN 1:20 / 4:00 / 6:40 / 9:20	CASANOVA 7:30 / 9:50	DATE MOVIE 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40 16 BLOCKS 1:55 / 4:30 / 7:05 / 9:40	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

AliMALL CINEMAS

1 V FOR VENDETTA 12:00 / 2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00	2 HOSTEL 12:15 / 2:20 / 4:25 / 6:30 / 8:35	3 THE FEARLESS 12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20
4 HOUSE OF FURY 1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00	5 SHE'S THE MAN 12:35 / 3:15 / 5:55 / 8:35	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 HOUSE OF FURY	2 V FOR VENDETTA	3 HOSTEL	4 SHE'S THE MAN
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 SHE'S THE MAN	2 V FOR VENDETTA	3 THX 16 BLOCKS 1:30, 3:45 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 SHAGGY DOG	5 HOSTEL	6 YOURS, MINE & OURS	7 DATE MOVIE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 16 BLOCKS	2 V FOR VENDETTA		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX SHE'S THE MAN 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX V FOR VENDETTA 2:50, 5:35, 8:20, 11:05 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 16 BLOCKS 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 DATE MOVIE 2:00, 3:40, 5:30, 7:15, 9:00, 10:45 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 HOSTEL 2:35, 4:45, 6:55, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX SHE'S THE MAN	2 V FOR VENDETTA		
	3 SHAGGY DOG	4 YOURS, MINE & OURS	5 HOSTEL	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 V FOR VENDETTA	2 HOSTEL	3 PRIDE & PREJUDICE	4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 V FOR VENDETTA	2 HOSTEL		
	3 HOUSE OF FURY	4 SHE'S THE MAN	5 SHAGGY DOG	

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Soured credit card loans up 10.4% to ₱16B

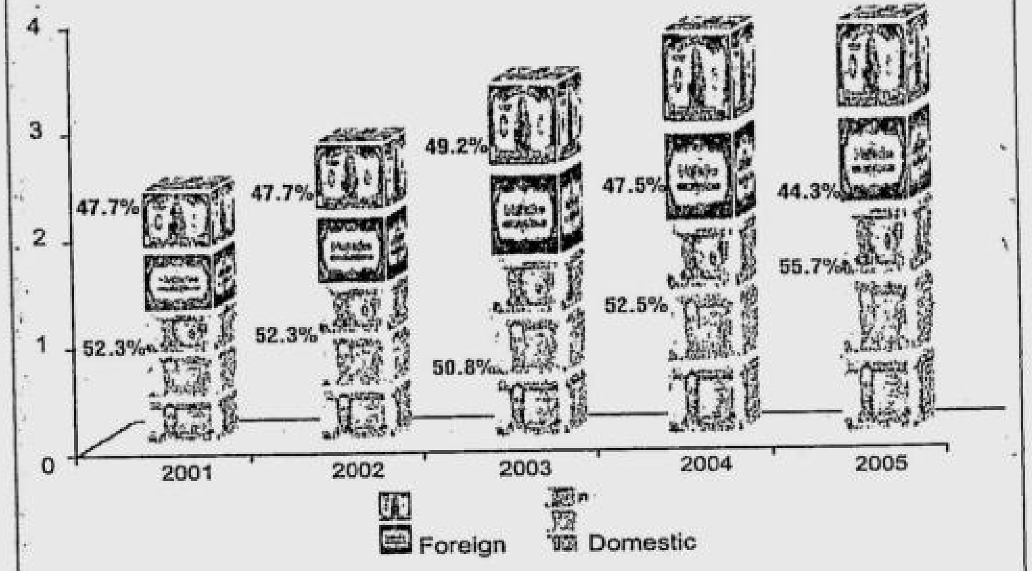
Ratio to banks' total exposure eased to 19.4% in '05

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Foreign debt share in total government debt falling (2001-2005, in trillion pesos)

AS OF END-DECEMBER 2005, the government's foreign debt stood at P1.72 trillion. This was 44 percent of the national government's total outstanding debt,the lowest percentage of foreign debt in five years.



Source: Bureau of the Treasury

Kate Pedroso PDI Research

By Doris C. Dumlao

BAD CREDIT CARD LOANS, AS reported by Philippine banks, dropped to 19.4 percent of total plastic-based lending at end-2005 from 21 percent a year ago, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

In real terms, the banking system's total past due credit card receivables amounted to about P16 billion—10.4 percent higher than the previous year. But the increase was offset by the 19.6-percent growth in total plastic-based lending to P82.8 billion at end-2005, resulting in a lower soured loans ratio to total credit card loan exposure of banks.

Credit card lending accounted for 4.7 percent of the banks' total loan portfolio in 2005 versus the 4-percent ratio of the previous year. About 68.2 percent of credit card receivables were held by universal and commercial banks, while their subsidiary credit card companies accounted for 28.2 percent.

The remaining 3.6 percent was held by thrift banks.

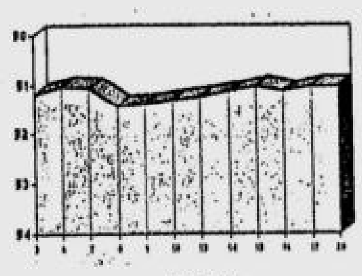
Also, the banks' past due auto loans dropped to 5 percent of total loans for vehicle acquisition at end-2005 from the 6-percent ratio posted a year ago.

Although past due auto loans rose by 2.2 per-

SOURED/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱51.03 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 20, 2006

¥116.10 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 20, 2006

GOLD: $555.70-556.20

per ounce Hong Kong, March 20, 2006

STOCK MARKET

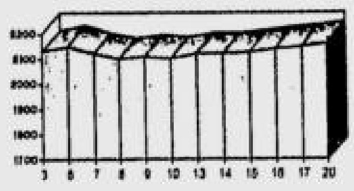
Shares close 0.61% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY rose 0.61 percent to close at the year's high as investors turned more confident on the improvement in the budget deficit, dealers said.

SHARES/B2

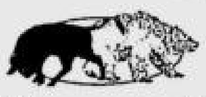
PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

MARCH



(See stock market report on Page B3)

WHAT'S INSIDE



Changing the index to free float /B2

New rules won't shut down thrift banks, BSP says /B5

At the market, foreign buying up 143% in Feb.

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FOREIGN BUYING AT THE stock market soared 143 percent to P35 billion in February from P14.4 billion in January, the Philippine Stock Exchange said in a statement yesterday.

But news of coup plots against the Arroyo administration also hurt foreign sentiment in the first two months as net foreign buying—or the total buying minus selling by foreign clients—fell 6.9 percent to P12.79 billion, lower than the year-ago level of P13.74 billion.

"This information goes to show that the reports of a coup still affected foreign investors," PSE president Francis Lim yesterday said.

The PSE noted that from Feb. 6 to Feb. 17, average weekly foreign buying hovered above the P2.5-billion mark from a little over P800 million in the first week of the same month.

But on the third week, when reports of a coup plot hit the headlines, average weekly foreign buying fell to the P800-million level, Lim pointed out.

"It's worth noting, however, that foreign buying exceeded foreign selling in all the weeks of February, including the tense third and fourth weeks," he added.

For February alone, net foreign buying increased almost five times to P10 billion from P2 billion in January.

"The facts speak for themselves," Lim said. "The local stock market still enjoys the confidence of foreign investors despite an (aborted) military coup in February."

Lim added that the increased foreign buying is "a vote of confidence" on the country's strong economic foundation.

"I believe foreign investors' enthusiasm in the local stock market will increase, if we can find a peaceful solution to political problems that confront the country today," Lim said.

Japan firm investing ₱3.3B in Philpost

By Michelle V. Remo

A JAPAN-BASED COMPANY IS set to infuse P3.3 billion into state-owned Philippine Postal Corp. (Philpost) to help modernize postal services in the country.

In line with the government's efforts to privatize state assets, the Cabinet-level Investment Coordinating Committee (ICC) has approved the proposal of ROA Systems Co. Ltd., an information technology company in Japan, to invest P3.3 billion in Philpost.

Jonathan Uy, director for public investment of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), said the investment by ROA would be made under a build-lease-transfer agreement with the government.

Under this arrangement, the government will lease Philpost to the Japanese IT firm for seven years. During the contract period, ROA will enhance the operational efficiency of the postal firm by installing the necessary hardware and software. It also will link up all Philipost offices nationwide.

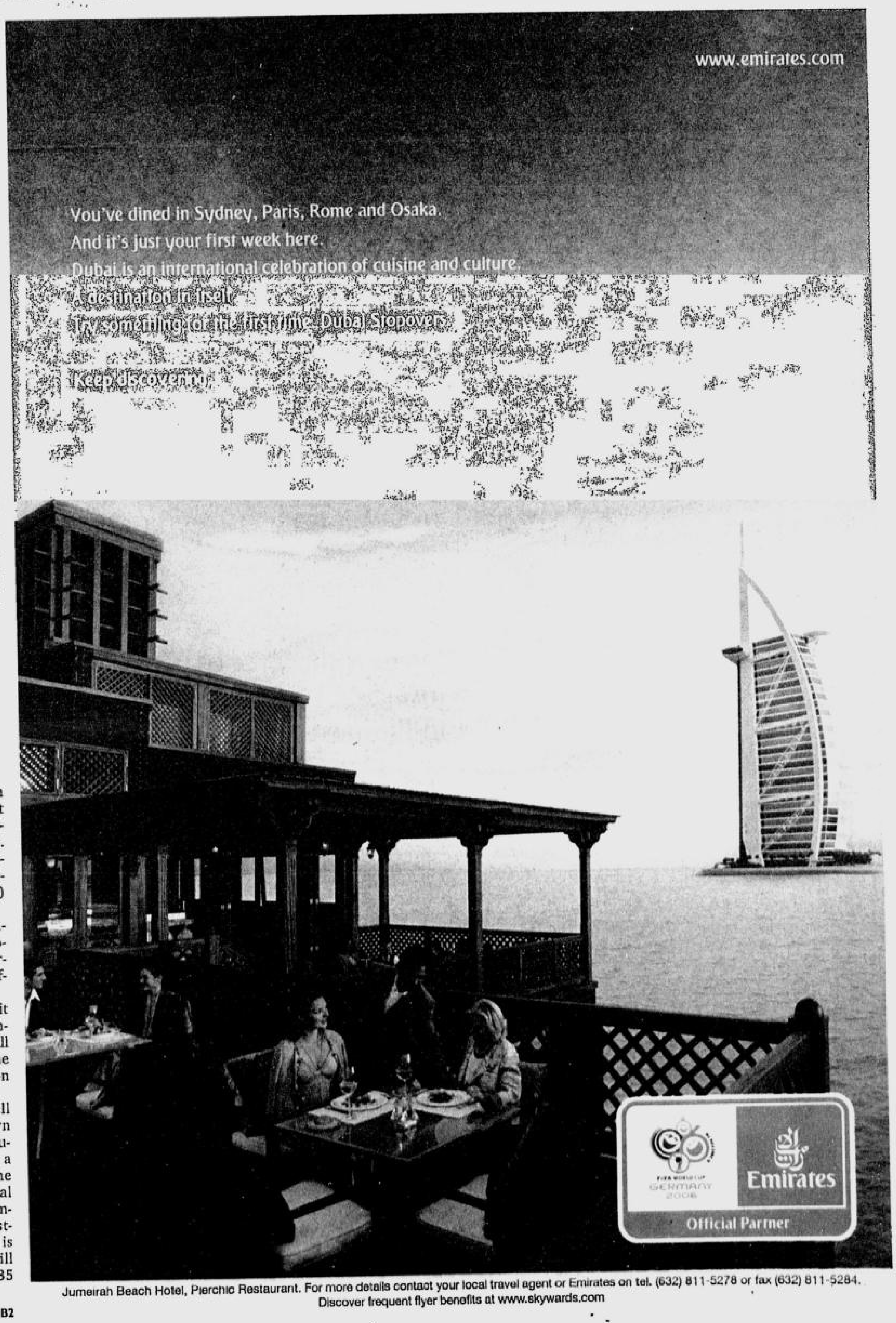
ROA will introduce modern communication services that will add value and improve income-generation of Philpost. The Neda said additional services would include voice-over-internet protocol (VoIP) and bills payment.

Under Philpost's modernization plan, ROA will also automate the post-office counter service by developing a point-of-sale system.

The Japanese firm will benefit from the proceeds of the enhanced postal services, but will have to turn over Philpost to the government upon the expiration of the lease contract.

The Japanese firm will shell out P1 billion from its own pocket for the initial fund infusion into Philpost. It got a P2.3-billion loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to complete the amount of investment committed. The loan is payable in seven years and will carry an interest rate of 2.35 percent per year.

JAPAN/B2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Changing the index to free float

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

I FELL THAT I HAVE TO WARN motorists about a scam that is going on in Makati. When you stop at a red light, two beautiful young ladies with big boobs, low cut dresses and no bras, step out and clean your front and side windows. In so doing, they bend down and make sure that you see their assets. Then they ask you to give them a lift, just a few hundred yards. You can hardly refuse so they get in the back seat and start kissing and fondling each other. Of course, this turns you on. Then one of the girls jumps in beside you and performs oral sex on you while the other one steals your wallet. I am telling you this because it has happened to me five times this week.

A paper bag walks into a paper view hospital complaining of a fever. The doctor agrees and asks, "Do you smoke?" "No, I don't smoke. I would catch fire." "Well, do you drink?" "No, I don't drink. I am only a paper bag." "Perhaps you have been taking drugs and sharing a needle." "No, doctor. Paper bags do not take drugs." In desperation, the doctor asks, "Maybe you had unprotected sex?" "Don't be silly, doctor. Paper bags don't have sex." "Well," says the doctor, "there is only one possible explanation. Your mother is a carrier—(bag)."

My wife went to the doctor to lose weight. He told her to eat normally for two days and then skip a day. That way, she should lose five pounds in two weeks. In fact, she lost 20 pounds and the doctor was amazed. "You really must have suffered," he said. "Yes," she replied, "especially on the third day." "From hunger?" he asked. "No, from skipping," she replied.

* * *

I am sorry I missed an article last week, but I caught a terrible cold and it turned into bronchitis so I did not feel well enough to write. Anyway, there wasn't much to write about. Since the middle of November, the Phisix has gone down, up, down, up, sharply down, sideways, up, down and up. Overall, it has risen less than 2 percent, and traded in a range of 2,040 to 2,172. So, except for second liners such as FDC, CHI, RLT, V, LR and IBNK, it has been extremely difficult to make money.

We have a resident technical analyst apart from myself, and on Friday night he wrote, "The Phisix rallied this week to close at 2,158, slightly below the major resistance level of 2,172. This is a make-or-break barrier for the market. If the Phisix can break out, the market may enjoy a quick pop higher, but if it fails, we could see the index waffling between the 2,040 and 2,172 range.

The market has failed several times since last year to get past this level. We would not want to be in a market that is struggling underneath a major resistance level. We prefer to have the market prove itself with a strong breakout before we enter. With the Phisix only 14 points away from the all-important resistance level, it makes better sense to leave these points on the table and buy on a real breakout instead."

His methods of technical analysis are totally different from mine. He uses Elliott Wave, Fibonacci, candlesticks and long-term moving averages. I use the degree of risk, a momentum indicator, and point and figure charts. We could not be more different in our approach but we nearly always end up agreeing on everything. This might seem strange at first sight but actually, it is not.

We both use the same limited input data—high, low, open, close and volume, so no matter how we package them, we should end up with the same conclusions. My risk factor is 97, well into the danger zone and a SELL on any sign of weakness but the economic background is so favorable that I think we have a better than 50-percent chance of succeeding this time.

***

On April 3, the PSE will again be changing the index, this time away from market capitalization to a "free float" system. This is much better because it takes into account the percentage of a company's shares that are actually available for trading. The criteria used are as follow:

- At least 10 percent of a corporation's shares must be classified as a free float. This removes PLTL, 92.2-percent owned by Smart and also HLCM, which is largely owned by Cemco after a controversial tender offer;
- stocks must trade at least 75 percent of all trading days;
- they must have an average daily turnover of not less than P5 million. This disqualifies MAC, AR and BCI, and
- replacing them are ELI, MA, SCC, RLC, EEI, TA and URC. The list will be reviewed every six months but the number of stocks will remain at 30. The full list will be published shortly. Stocks that look precarious in the longer term are BEL, DGTL, MPC and possibly DMC.

As I wrote two weeks ago, the Phisix is not supposed to be the 30 best quality stocks (that is arguable anyway). It is the 30 stocks that are the most tradable and therefore, have sufficient liquidity to attract institutional investors and foreign investment houses. SMC did not make the new index despite its large capitalization because only 2.4 percent of SMC and 7.4 percent of SMCB are traded daily. SMCB traded only 11,000 shares yesterday.

I also feel that in making calculations of daily turnover, cross sales should be excluded as these are purely internal transactions, mainly by foreign brokers, and not available to investors. On this basis, FGEN would not yet qualify, as practically all the turnover is cross selling.

These periodic changes are good because it makes the index more reflective of actual turnover. They might affect some stocks because mutual funds, insurance companies, pension funds and large trusts often align themselves with the constituents of the Phisix. Maybe, this is why PLTL and HLCM have fallen while ELI and MA have risen today.

Unfortunately, for all analysts, it makes performance measurements against an ever-changing index more difficult but this is a small price to pay for a more representative index. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com.*

KING JAMES AUCTION
• ON-SITE AUCTION •
REGISTRATION & VIEWING DATES: MAR. 21-22, 2006, 9:00AM-5:00PM
SITE LOCATION: 1281 G ARANETA AVENUE, Q.C.
AUCTION DATE: MARCH 23,2006 (THUR), 10:30 AM
UNDER THE INSTRUCTION OF A MAJOR JANITORIAL / CLEANING SERVICES COMPANY
(73) UNITS INDUSTRIAL FLOOR POLISHER 17", (89) UNITS INDUSTRIAL FLOOR POLISHER 13", (65) UNITS WET & DRY VACUUM CLEANER, (47) PCS. RUBBERMAID MOP BUCKET W/ WRINGER, (57) PCS. RUBBERMAID JANITORIAL CART L-TYPE, (8) PCS. RUBBERMAID WASTE RECEPTACLE BIG WHEEL, (8) UNITS 4-LAYER STEEL FILING CABINET, CLEANING CHEMICALS, FIRE EXTINGUISHERS, 5,000 PCS. TRASH BAG, (25) PCS. WET FLOOR SIGN (METAL), (50) PCS.STICK BROOM, OFFICE TABLES, COMPUTERS, AIRCONDITIONS, SHOP EQUIPMENT AND MANY MORE...
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Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office V
ANST Bldg. III, Alternate Road, Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

BIDDING FOR SECURITY SERVICES
ITB# PROV-2006-02

Agency must be duly licensed and a member of good standing of the Philippine Association of Detective and Protective Association Operators (PADPAO), Inc.; With certification from DOLE that the agency has no records of violation of existing labor laws; With certification from SSS, Pag-Ibig and PhilHealth of the regular remittance on employer and employees' contribution.

The PhilHealth Regional Office V, through the **2006 Corporate Operating Budget**, intends to apply the sum of **Two Million Sixty-Three Thousand Forty pesos (P2,063,040.00)**, being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **Security Service**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The **PRO V** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for **Security Service, with Security Agency certified by the Philippine Association of Detective and Protective Association Operators (PADPAO), Inc.; With certification from DOLE that the agency has no records of violation of existing labor laws; With certification from SSS, Pag-Ibig and PhilHealth of the regular remittance on employer and employees' contribution.** Delivery of the GOODS is required **within May 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006.** The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder of the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **PRO V** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **8:00 am – 5:00 pm.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of **Four Thousand Pesos (P4,000.00) from March 28 – April 10, 2006.** The method of payment will be **in a form of cash or check payable to PRO V.** The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The **PRO V** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **April 11, 2006, (2:00 PM – PRO V Conference Room).**

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below **on or before April 24, 2006, 2:00 PM.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of the following or an amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

FORM OF SECURITY	MINIMUM AMOUNT IN % OF APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT TO BE BID
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft, or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1 %)
2. Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2 %)
3. Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2 %)
4. Foreign Government Guarantee	One hundred percent (100 %)

Bid opening shall be on **April 24, 2006, 2:00 PM at PRO V Conference Room.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The **PRO V** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Orlando D. Iñigo, Jr. – Assistant Vice-President
PhilHealth Regional Office V
ANST Bldg. III, Alternate Road, Legazpi City
Telefax: 481-5597
e-mail add: admin.pro5@philhealth.gov.ph
website: www.philhealth.gov.ph

(Sgd.) IRENEO A. DACILLO
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-March 15 & 21, 2006)

Measures eyed to thwart profiteers

Guidelines meant to regulate power 'redistributors,' ERC says

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY REGULATORY Commission has drafted a set of guidelines that will prevent profiteering by electricity "redistributors," or entities such as building or condominium administrators or apartment owners, that distribute electricity to tenants or individual unit owners.

According to the regulatory body, the proposed Rules on Redistribution of Electricity will ensure that electricity redistributors, or entities that are singly connected and contract-bound to distribution utilities, will not profit from the distribution of power to end-users.

"The old practice has brought a lot of complaints from among building or apartment occupants, which necessitates the ERC to come up with a policy that will regulate the charges being collected by these redistributors," ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said in a statement yesterday.

Under the current set-up, distribution utilities issue a "mother meter" to electricity redistributors to enable them to measure the total energy consumption of the connected establishments.

According to the draft rules, the ERC will install sub-meters, which bear an ERC seal, in individual condominium or apartment units to monitor actual electricity consumption there.

Every condominium or apartment unit occupant will also be covered by the Magna Carta for Residential Electricity Consumers, which outline the rights, privileges and responsibilities of electricity end-users, and by the Distribution Services and Open Access Rules.

The ERC will conduct a public consultation on the proposed guidelines on April 21, to enable concerned parties to air their views on the matter.

The proposed rules will,govern all electricity redistributors, except for buildings or apartment compounds where the approved electrical designs allow the installation of a billing meter in each of the tenants' units.

Soured credit card loans up 10.4% to ₱16B

From page B1

cent from the previous year to P3 billion at end-2005, total auto lending grew by 22.6 percent—the fastest expansion seen in five years.

Total auto lending in 2005 reached P61.22 billion, up from the P49.9 billion posted in 2004.

Most banks welcome the news of the slowdown in the past due ratios, which reflected well in their overall consumer lending portfolio. The banks are seen to be edging out corporate lenders, partly due to the aggressive campaigns carried out by credit card issuers.

But one of the reasons why past due credit card receivables were dropping was due to the borrowers' widespread use of balance transfer facilities as offered by plastic issuers, said Pascual Garcia, president of one of the country's largest thrift banks Philippine Savings Bank.

"The balance is circulating from one credit card issuer to another," Garcia said in an interview yesterday. "The debt is no longer past due with one credit card because it has been transferred to another."

Other bankers noted that the aggressive offers of balance transfer services were an indication of the cutthroat competition among credit card issuers.

The bankers said that the credit card issuers were eating up each other's market while the pie was not growing fast enough.

Garcia said the car industry posted a 10 percent growth in sales last year, which indicated that those who availed of car loans had increased by the same magnitude.

"In our case, we also saw a decline in past due auto loans," Garcia said. "I guess it's due to the improvement in the profile of borrowers and portfolio of banks."

Thrift banks, the main provider of auto loans, reported a 12.6-percent growth in vehicle lending last year. The sector accounted for P40.3 billion or 65.9 percent of the banking system's auto lending last year.

Auto loans accounted for 3.48 percent of banks' total loan portfolio last year, rising from a 2.89 percent share the previous year.

As a ratio of the banking system's total nonperforming loans, soured auto loans accounted for 1.6 percent, while bad credit card exposure was pegged at 2.87 percent as of end-2005.

Philippine commercial banks' NPL ratio to total loans shrunk to an eight-year low of 8.51 percent at end-2005 against the 12.72 percent of the previous year, as banks unloaded bad assets by the bulk using Special Purpose Vehicles.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that the end-December nonperforming loan ratio further eased from the 8.76 percent ratio of end-November.

The commercial banking system's NPL ratio has fallen back to a single digit level in 2005 for the first time since the Asian currency turmoil of 1997.

Japan firm investing ₱3.3B in Philpost

From page B1

Under the contract period, the government will get a share of Philpost's revenue in the form of lease fee. Uy, however, did not disclose the amount involved.

The government has included Philpost in its list of assets for privatization, having adopted the policy of giving up functions deemed better run by the private sector.

"Privatization need not always come in the form of outright sale. It could also be in the form of a lease agreement," Uy said.

Shares close 0.61% higher

From page B1

They said that the improvement in the fiscal position has more than offset concerns about prevailing political tensions as President Macapagal-Arroyo continues to fend off efforts to oust her.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 13.14 points to 2,163.31 after trading between 2,148.25 and 2,163.66 points. This is the composite's highest finish since March 7 last year, when it ended at 2,166.10.

Gainers led losers 41 to 32, with 52 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 761.6 million shares worth P1.0 billion ($19.6 million).

The Philippine peso was at 51.035 to the dollar at mid-day trade.

"Investors seem to be cheering the improvement in the fiscal data," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings Inc. "It looks like the trend is going to be sustained."

The finance department on Friday announced that improved revenues had trimmed the country's budget deficit to P25 billion in February, well within the P27.2 billion target for the month.

For the first two months of the year, the deficit stood at P40.4 billion, below the P48.1 billion target.

Top-traded Bank of the Philippine Islands closed up P1.50 at P63.50.

Second most active SM Investments Corp. retreated one peso to P224 on profit-taking after last week's gains. Its unit SM Prime Holdings was down 20 centavos at P7.90.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone gained five pesos to P1,830.

Ayala Land Inc. gained 25 centavos to P10.75, while parent Ayala Corp. was steady at P345. Globe Telecom rose P20 to P895.

San Miguel Corp. A shares, limited to Filipino investors, closed flat at P60.50. San Miguel Corp. B shares, open to foreign investors, gained one peso at P79. *AFP*

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 20, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL			
		BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35.5	34.5	35.5	649,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62.5	64	62.5	63.5	2,713,900
China Banking Corp.	685	685	685	685	150
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	1,210,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	78	78	74	75	206,900
International Exch. Bank	26.5	27.5	26.5	27.5	112,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	37.5	38.5	37.5	38	516,700
Philippine National Bank	31.5	32	31.5	32	6,500
Phil. Savings Bank	35.5	35.5	35	35	28,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13	13	13	5,300
Security Bank Corp.	37.5	38	37.5	38	195,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	35	35	35	35	17,300
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
First Metro Invest. Corp.	24.25	24.5	24.25	24.5	4,800
Manulife Financial Corp.	3210	3210	3210	3210	60
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	600,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2160	2160	2150	2150	330
Ivantage Corp.	0.82	0.82	0.81	0.81	2,850,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
First Gen Corp.	41	42	41	42	61,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	42	42	41.5	42	665,800
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13	13	13	87,100
Manila Electric Co. B	20	20	19.75	19.75	271,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.4	3,592,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55	975,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.89	0.89	40,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	19	19	19	19	10,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	38	38	37	37	107,700
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	16	16	16	16	25,500
Pancake House Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	5,000
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	482,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	60	60.5	91,300
San Miguel Corp. B	78.5	79	78.5	79	11,100
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.25	312,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.2	0.29	310,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	60,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.28	1.3	1.26	1.26	2,651,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.35	4.35	4.3	4.3	715,000
		CHEMICALS			
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	50,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	500,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.35	0.38	0.35	0.38	100,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	2,000,000
Ayala Corp.	345	345	342.5	345	308,090
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5	5	5	5	541,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.44	2.46	2.4	2.4	183,000
APC Group Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	1,360,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	25,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.87	0.88	0.87	0.88	150,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	1	0.98	0.99	4,260,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	424,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.5	2.65	2.5	2.65	3,177,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	5	5.1	5	5.1	282,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	200,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	4,050,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	20,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	2,830,000
SM Investments Corp.	224	226	224	224	499,050
South China Resources Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.73	0.73	140,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.46	0.48	0.46	0.48	60,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.13	2,370,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	5,133,400
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Belle Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.04	3,515,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	30,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	500,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.72	1.72	672,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.52	1.56	240,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	3,600,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.52	0.53	24,090,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	10,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.24	4,532,000
Interport Res.	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	13,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	960,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47	2,230,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.48	6,161,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	2,090,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	500,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.27	11,020,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.9	7.9	4,044,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.14	1,680,000
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.5	12.25	11.5	12.25	95,500
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.88	400,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	880	895	880	895	53,780
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.05	3.15	3.05	3.15	1,014,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1830	1835	1830	1830	58,130
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.205	1,780,000
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	16,700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	900,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	6,000
Philweb Corp.	0.023	0.023	0.021	0.021	101,600,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.64	1.66	1.64	1.66	84,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12	12.25	12	12	460,400
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.28	1.38	1.28	1.38	12,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.55	4	3.5	3.5	792,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.86	1.92	1.86	1.9	8,555,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	5,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	200,000
		EDUCATION			
iPeople Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	109,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Macroasia Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	5,000
Paxys Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.4	1,828,000
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1	1.04	1	1.04	101,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.22	1.22	1.18	1.18	41,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.007	163,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	692,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.21	6,580,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	340,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	73,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	24,200,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	2.04	2.06	2.02	2.06	11,938,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.22	2.24	2.18	2.2	6,534,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	6,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.31	540,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.34	500,000
		OIL			
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	300,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	20,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	84,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	20,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	2,000
		PREFERRED			
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
		WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.			
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.5	12.25	11.5	12.25	346,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Financial	9,118,740	246,409,600.00
Industrial	11,136,500	88,393,965.00
Holding Firms	47,954,140	239,196,360.00
Property	165,107,400	171,308,800.00
Service	134,757,810	202,425,925.00
Mining & Oil	392,394,500	49,617,360.00
GRAND TOTALS :	760,469,090	997,352,010.00

	AVERAGES	
Financial	695.56	UP 8.21
Industrial	3,046.54	DOWN 3.68
Holding Firms	1,046.40	DOWN 1.93
Property	887.31	UP 4.70
Service	1,047.75	UP 9.77
Mining & Oil	3,156.60	UP 33.97
All Shares Index	1,322.26	UP 6.43
Composite	2,163.31	UP 13.14

NO. OF ADVANCES: 41; NO. OF DECLINES: 32; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 52; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 125; NO. OF TRADES: 3,005

CURRENCIES

March 20, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.820277	1.000000	51.0660
Japan	Yen	0.007080	0.008631	0.4408
United Kingdom	Pound	1.440981	1.756700	89.7076
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105748	0.128917	6.5833
Switzerland	Franc	0.635923	0.775254	39.5891
Canada	Dollar	0.708601	0.863856	44.1137
Singapore	Dollar	0.507754	0.619003	31.6100
Australia	Dollar	0.597260	0.728120	37.1822
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.175917	2.652661	135.4608
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.218723	0.266645	13.6165
Brunei	Dollar	0.506187	0.617093	31.5125
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000110	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021152	0.025786	1.3168
UAE	Dirham	0.223344	0.272279	13.9042
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.219100	62.2546
Argentina	Peso	0.266974	0.325468	16.6203
Brazil	Real	0.386377	0.471032	24.0537
Denmark	Kroner	0.134028	0.163393	8.3438
India	Rupee	0.018537	0.022599	1.1540
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.221457	0.269978	13.7867
Mexico	New Peso	0.076654	0.093449	4.7721
New Zealand	Dollar	0.519985	0.633914	32.3715
Norway	Kroner	0.125473	0.152964	7.8113
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013655	0.016647	0.8501
South Africa	Rand	0.131899	0.160798	8.2113
Korea	Won	0.000845	0.001030	0.0526
Sweden	Kroner	0.107248	0.130746	6.6767
Syria	Pound	0.015802	0.019264	0.9837
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025329	0.030879	1.5769
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000382	0.000466	0.0238

Petron profit seen at 10-yr high of ₱6B

IMPROVEMENTS IN operations and robust export volume boosted Petron Corp.'s unaudited net income to P6.04 billion in 2005, its best showing in 10 years.

The oil firm said in a statement yesterday that its 2005 net income eclipsed its record profit of P4.2 billion in 1996, before the downstream oil industry was deregulated.

The P6.04 billion profit was also more than double of Petron's 2004 net income of P3.42 billion.

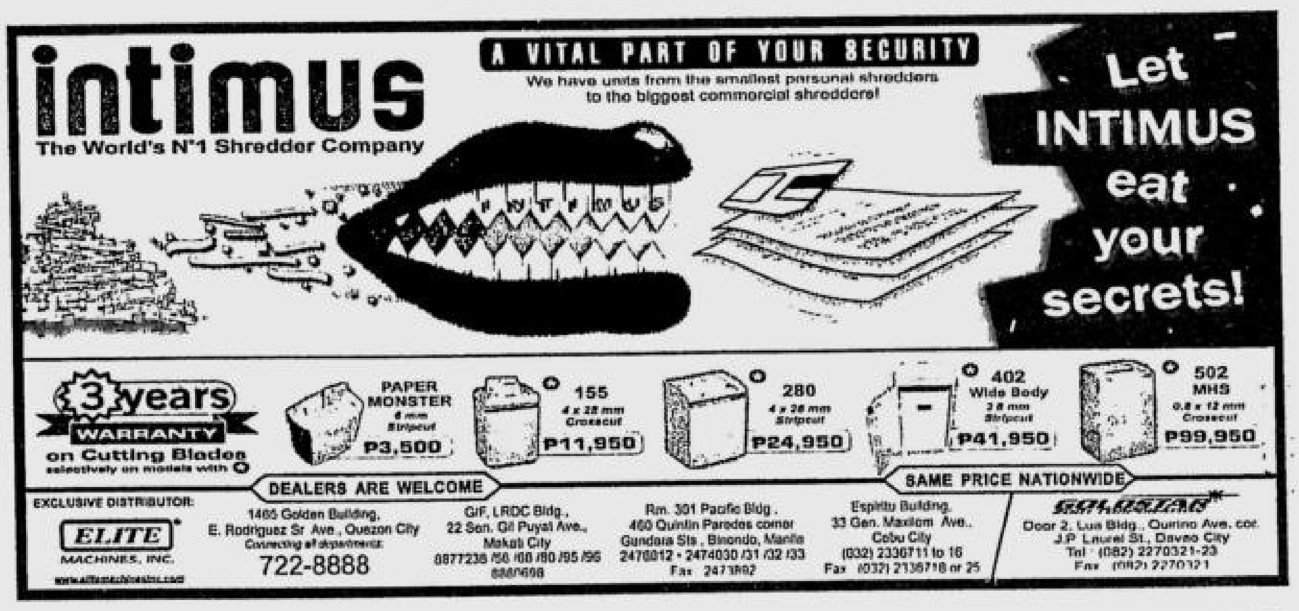
Total sales revenue in 2005 grew 29.8 percent to P191.49 billion from year ago's P147.42 billion.

Export volumes jumped 45.3 percent to 7.96 million barrels last year from 5.48 million barrels in 2004.

However, sluggish domestic demand pulled overall sales volume down by 2 percent to 51.67 million barrels from 52.76 million barrels the year before.

Petron president and chief executive Khalid Al-Faddagh said the company benefited from the commissioning of its isomerization unit and gas oil hydrotreater early last year as these facilities allowed it to produce Clean Air Act-compliant gasoline and diesel without resorting to importation.

He said Petron's decision to invest in a mixed xylene unit earlier proved beneficial as this paved the way for the company's foray in the petrochemical market. *Abigail L. Ho*



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PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Procurement of Management Consultancy for the Cost-Based Tariff Analysis and Development Project

1. The ***Philippine Ports Authority (PPA)***, through its **CY *2006 Corporate Budget approved by the PPA Board of Directors*** intends to apply the sum of ***PhP14,571,928.00 (E-VAT Inclusive)*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for ***Procurement of Management Consultancy for the Cost-Based Tariff Analysis and Development Project.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposals.
2. The ***PPA*** now calls for the submission of ***Letters of Intent (LOI)*** from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for ***Procurement of Management Consultancy for the Cost-Based Tariff Analysis and Development Project.*** Interested consultants must submit their LOIs on or before ***April 4, 2006*** at ***8:00 AM to 4:00 PM at Philippine Ports Authority, Room 505 Commercial Services Department, Marsman Bldg., 22 Muelle de San Francisco, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila*** and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom ***upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PhP1,120.00 (E-VAT Inclusive).*** Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: ***April 5, 2006 not later than 1:00 PM at the above address.*** Only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.
3. The ***Special*** Bids and Awards Committee (***S***BAC) shall draw up the short list of consultancy firms from those who have submitted ***LOIs*** and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The short list of prospective bidders shall consist of ***five (5)*** consultancy firms. The criteria ***(per Sec. 24.15.3, IRR-A of RA 9184)*** and rating system for short listing are:
   1. ***Applicable experience of the Consultant and associates in case of joint ventures, considering both the overall experiences of the firm and the individual experiences of the principal and key staff including the times employed by other Consultants - 30%;***
   2. ***Qualification of personnel who may be assigned to the job vis-à-vis extent and complexity of the undertaking - 50%; and***
   3. ***Current workload relative to capacity- 20%.***
4. ***LOIs*** must be delivered by hand, through mail, or facsimile to the address below at ***8:00 AM to 4:00 PM*** on or before ***April 4, 2006.***
5. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A 9184, only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The PPA shall evaluate bids using the ***Quality Cost-Based Evaluation (QCBE)*** procedure. ***The Technical and Financial Proposals shall be given corresponding weights of 70% and 30%, respectively.*** The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
6. Interested consultants may obtain further information from the ***PPA*** at the address given below from ***8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.***

   The cost of bidding documents shall be a non-refundable amount of PhP11,200.00 (E-VAT-inclusive).
7. The contract shall be completed ***within eight (8) months.***
8. The ***PPA*** reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Philippine Ports Authority
Benjamin B. Cecilio
Chairperson, Special Bids and Awards Committee
Room 505, Commercial Services Department, Marsman Bldg.
22 Muelle de San Francisco, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila
(632) 301-9075 (Telefax) or (632) 527-8356 loc. 260 to 266
bbc@ppa.com.ph or elsusara@ppa.com.ph
(632) 301-9075
http://www.ppa.com.ph

Benjamin B. Cecilio
Signature of ***S***BAC Chairperson or Authorized Representative of the ***S***BAC Chairperson

(PDI–March 14 & 21, 2006)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

Reference:
Date : March 07, 2006

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Construction of Mindanao System Operations Control Center Building (SP05.MSOCC.Mc-0064)

Furnishing, Installing, Constructing, Operating and Maintaining General Construction Facilities, Site Development, Construction of Two Story Office and System Operations Control Center Building.

The project is located Rodeo Site, Maria Cristina, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte.

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TransCo)**, through the **Annual Corporate Budget for the contract approved by the governing board**, intends to apply the sum of **PHP 49,487,412.00** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Construction of Mindanao System Operations Control Center Building (SP05.MSOCC.Mc-0064)**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. **TransCo** now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for **Furnishing, Installing, Constructing, Operating and Maintaining General Construction Facilities, Site Development, Construction of Two Story Office and System Operations Control Center Building** (please see attached Work Scope). Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before date and time stated below at the address given below and secure the Eligibility Documents there from upon payment of non-refundable fee of stated below. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents stated below. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents. PCAB License and Registration Particular required should be as follows:

License Particular	at least Category "B", SP-General Building
Registration Particular	at least "Medium A", SP-Building & Industrial Works

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In Accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at the address given below.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from **TransCo** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the BCMD at the address given below.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee as stated below. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative starting from the schedule specified below.
7. **TransCo** will hold a Pre-Bid conference open to all Eligible Bidders on the schedule specified below.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before the schedule of submission and opening specified below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any form and in amount stated in the Bidding Documents or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted
9. The Contractor shall complete the works within **Two Hundred Fifty Five (255) calendar days** inclusive of fifteen (15) rainy/unworkable days counted from the effective date stated in the Notice to Proceed.
10. **TransCo** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

	Activity	Date	Venue
a.	Issuance of Eligibility Documents	Starting March 09, 2006 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	BCMD office address below
b.	Submission & Opening of Eligibility Documents	March 28, 2006 9:00 AM	De La Paz Function Room Training Center Bldg., TransCo, Diliman Quezon City
c.	Issuance of Bidding Documents	Starting April 20, 2006 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	BCMD office address below
d	Pre-Bid Conference	May 11, 2006, 1:30 PM	BCMD office address below
f.	Bid Submission & Opening	May 31, 2006, 9:00 AM	BCMD office address below
	Cost of Eligibility Documents per copy		P 800.00
	Cost of Bidding Documents per copy		P 7,000.00

Mr. JOSE MARI M. ILAGAN
Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department (BCMD)
Ground Floor, TransCo Main Building
Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City 1104
Telephone Nos.: 981-2308, 981-2212, 981-2213
Facsimile No.: 921-2308
Email Address: jmilagan@transco.ph
Website Address: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) GUILLERMO R. REDOBLADO
VP - Luzon Operation & Maintenance
& Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - March 10 & 21, 2006)

Gov't planning to relax rules on granting investment perks

Ensuring consistency in export promotion policies, programs

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING RElaxing the rules governing the granting of investment perks by allowing export-oriented projects not listed in the Investment Priorities Plan to enjoy full incentives.

According to an informed source, the government intends to offer up to six years of tax holiday and other fiscal and nonfiscal perks to export businesses that are not listed in the IPP but are covered by the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan of 2004-2010 and the Philippine Export Development Plan.

The source said this move was aimed at making the various export promotion policies and programs of the government consistent.

Under the 2005 IPP, only projects related to the following industry clusters are eligible for full incentives: Agri-business; healthcare and wellness products and services; information and communications technology; electronics; motor vehicle products; energy; infrastructure; tourism; shipbuilding/shipping; jewelry, and fashion garments.

According to the official, projects like those engaged in the exportation of furniture and wearables would be qualified even if these are not part of the 11 priority sectors.

Also, the official said the government was considering to incorporate its RED (retention, expansion and development) program in the IPP promotion scheme.

The RED program is aimed at making existing projects stay in the country, as well as grow and spur related businesses.

However, projects related to financial services—such as banks, loan associations, brokerage and dealership of securities, cooperatives and credit unions—will remain not qualified for incentives granted by the Board of Investments. The exclusion is consistent with Article 11, Book 1 of the Omnibus Investments Code.

In related developments, the BOI said the government was considering the possibility of qualifying for incentives cement manufacturing and coal mining in future IPPs.

Cement production, which was removed from the IPP three years ago due to an excess in domestic production capacity, may again be qualified for perks after data show that demand may overtake production capacity by 2010.

While mining in general is not listed in the IPP, coal mining may be made eligible for incentives through registration as a project that uses indigenous material for production of electricity.

US bank offers depositors new investment option

By Doris C. Dumlao

AMERICAN BANKING GIANT CITIBANK will introduce in the Philippines a high-yielding US dollar time deposit instrument that can be withdrawn in fractions by the depositor if need for cash arises.

Encouraged by the warm market reception to a similar peso-denominated product, Citibank Philippines will soon launch the instrument that will yield 3.5 percent per year for a minimum placement of $10,000, said retail banking director Ailene Litonjua in an interview.

The Citibank Dollar Withdrawable Time Deposit is a one-year instrument that allows the depositor to break up his placement into as low as $1,000 worth of certificates.

A minimum of $10,000 placement, for instance, could be broken down into 10 certificates worth $1,000. The depositor can withdraw only the portion needed and keep the balance to earn the 3.5 percent maximum yield until maturity.

The portion withdrawn, if kept for more than a month, would still earn interest of 1 percent per year.

Litonjua said the product was aimed at drumming up interest in time deposits by allowing flexibility and higher interest rates not given to regular time deposits.

The new instrument is said to be ideal for clients who have liquid assets but are undecided on where to park their money.

"This is a regional product for Citibank. It's called unfixed time deposits in other markets, including Singapore, "Litonjua said.

Citibank is offering a similar instrument in pesos for a minimum placement of P500,000, targeting those who want to start investing for better returns but still want to play safe and stay liquid.

The bank's withdrawable peso time deposit gives clients an assured gain of 6 percent without having to lock up their money for a long time.

Exporters seen getting hit by new Customs law

EXPORTERS SAID THEY were facing a double whammy, getting hit by the continued appreciation of the peso and the implementation of the Customs Brokers Act.

The Philippine Exporters Confederation said the Customs Brokers Act, deemed as a "deadly" law that would undermine gains in addressing red tape, would worsen the exporters' condition which was already compromised with the continued appreciation of the peso. The peso yesterday closed at 51.03 to $1.

Philexport president Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr. earlier said the exporters' businesses, most of which are small- and medium-sized enterprises, would no longer be profitable if the peso continued to strengthen.

The group said the Customs Brokers law might deliver the knock-out punch to the already "wobbly" sector.

Philexport explained that the law gave to accredited customs brokers the exclusive right to sign import and export documents, despite repeated objections by Philexport, the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc., and Port Users Confederation.

The Customs Brokers Act takes effect today but business groups that oppose the law, including those involved in logistics and cargo forwarding, are planning to seek a temporary restraining order from the courts to prevent its implementation.

For instance, Seipi is worried that efforts to cut red tape in Customs—including the Automatic Export Documentation System (AEDS) which it pioneered—might be stopped if import and export entries signed by brokers would be required.

Also, Philexport said some 20,000 people working in brokerage firms, import and export companies, the logistics industry and other related enterprises might lose their jobs which were made irrelevant by the said law.

Ortiz-Luis said exporters feared that the added red tape would result in shipment delays in Philippine exit ports, which were already ranked the least efficient in the world.

He said the law should be stopped or corrected through amendments.

Last week, Philexport warned of "a clear and present danger" posed by the appreciating peso to tens of thousands of jobs and SMEs.

The group urged the government to adjust economic policies to balance the interests of other segments of the economy with the survival of the exporters and the families of million overseas workers who were contributing up to 65 percent of the total value of goods and services produced by the country yearly. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

SMC dairy unit to acquire Aussie cheese firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

NATIONAL FOODS LTD., THE DAIRY unit of San Miguel Corp. said it had entered into a binding agreement to acquire Australian specialty cheese manufacturing firm Lactos Pty. Ltd. from French firm Bongrain International SAS, the company said in a statement.

National Foods, however, did not disclose the purchase price and the terms of the deal.

Lactos is one of Australia's leading specialty cheese makers producing fine cheese under key brands Tasmanian Heritage, Mersey Valley and Australian Gold. It has manufacturing operations at Burnie and a smaller farmhouse cheese manufacturing facility at Heidi in Tasmania. It also has a cut and wrap facility in Mulgrave, Victoria.

The acquisition will increase National Foods' exposure to the fast growing high-value cheese segment following its acquisition of The King Island Company in February 2002.

"Lactos is a significant acquisition for National Foods and is expected to contribute to the development of our growing cheese and gourmet foods business," National Foods managing director Ashley Waugh said.

"It will broaden our overall range of high value specialty cheese and products and give us access to additional manufacturing intellectual property and skilled employees. It also opens up for our parent firm, San Miguel Corp., additional export growth opportunities in Asian markets."

The acquisition is expected to be completed shortly and is subject to the approval of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Foreign Investment Review Board.

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In recognition of their development efforts, DBP honors its top performing PFIs who have most actively contributed in the efficient dispersal of funds in support of the national government's program to fuel sustainable economic growth, nurture the environment, and uplift the standard of living of all Filipinos.

DBP likewise acknowledges the vital role that each team member plays and looks forward to a synergy of team efforts towards achieving the collective mission of sustainable growth and development for all.

New rules won't shut down thrift banks, BSP says

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas will penalize inefficient banks once it starts enforcing international banking standards to measure investment risk.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. announced the new rules during the annual convention of the Philippine Chamber of Thrift Banks held here last week.

Tetangco said the rules should encourage small- and medium-scale banks to improve and not shut down because its aim was to ensure industry transparency.

He said the new rules would also measure the competency of bank officials to ensure that they possess the integrity and capability required for the job.

In a video-recorded speech, he said banking reforms had set in place a new risk-management system that was drafted in November 2005 by the Committee on Banking Supervision in Basel, Switzerland.

The document, which the industry refers to as Basel II, requires all banks to "measure, monitor, mitigate and disclose risk," Tetangco said.

Ma. Dolores Yuvienco, BSP managing director, said her agency had been applying the rules produced by Basel I, the first global bank capital accord in 1988, which puts a value to each stage or category of risks that a bank takes in capitalizing a project.

The BSP reforms were expected to increase the capital requirements of many thrift banks. This has compelled some chamber members to anticipate a series of shutdowns this year.

Rogelio Florete, president of Queen City Development Bank and the Bombo Radyo Philippines network, raised this fear when members of the chamber talked to Yuvienco at the conference.

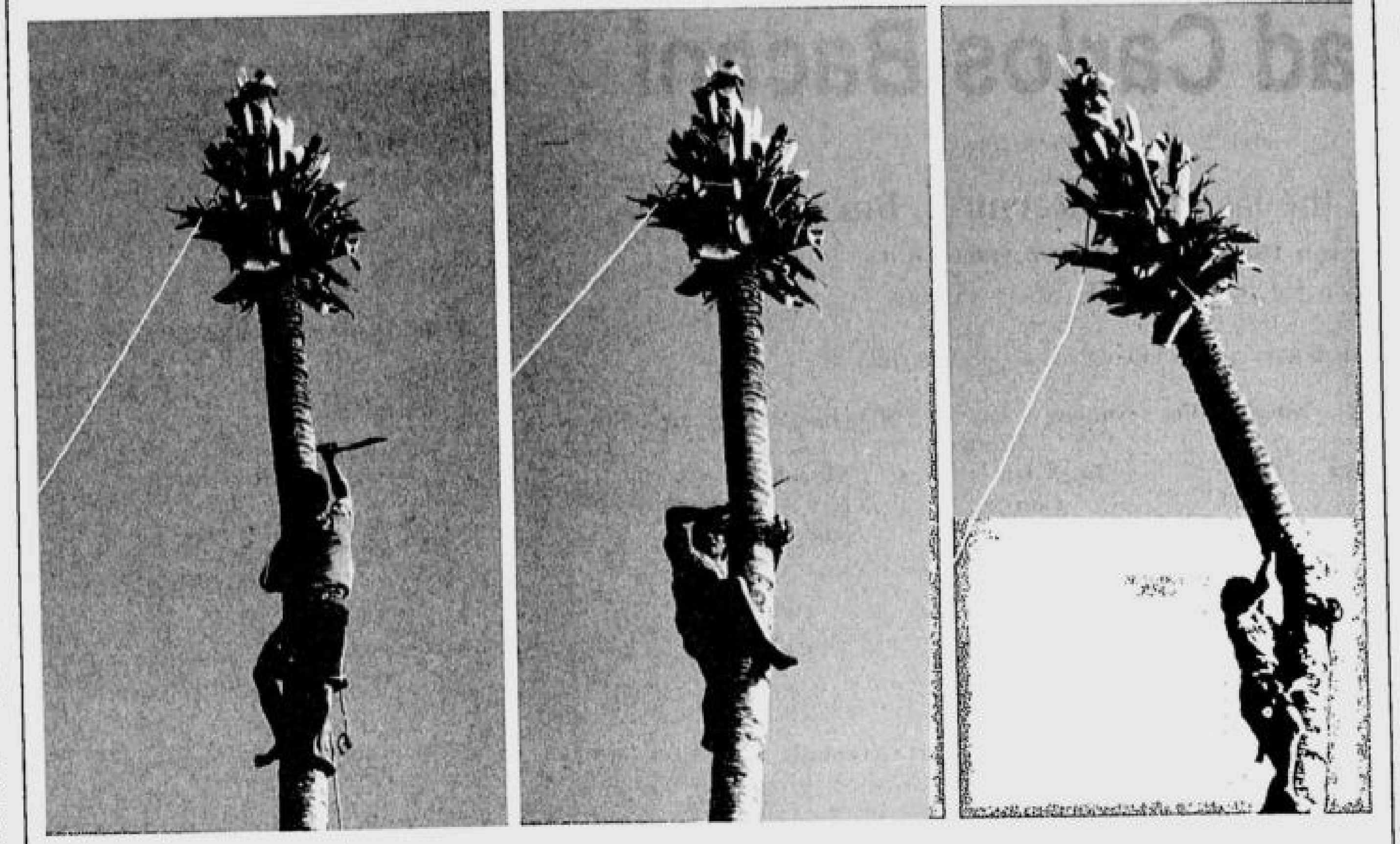
But Yuvienco said the BSP was "not there to close banks." Rather, these standards were designed to avoid "discrimination" from overseas money markets, she said.

Alfonso Salcedo Jr., incoming chamber president and president of the BPI Family Bank, said the industry would accept the changes because the local banks needed the reforms.

Thrift banks hold P261.35 billion in deposits, equivalent to 9 percent of the deposits of the entire banking system.

According to the chamber, the sector's primary investments are in middle-income housing projects, where it poured in P51.37 billion in 2005.

"By shifting to a more strategic regulation of corporate governance, risk management and capital adequacy, we hope to give banks much better flexibility to pursue businesses that are consistent with their expertise, risk appetite, and capital position," Tetangco said.



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GRACE CANTAL-ALBASIN/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Visa remains bullish on RP, cites rising sales

DAVAO CITY—PAYMENT PROCESSOR Visa International said it remained bullish on the Philippines due to increasing retail sales.

Visa reported here recently that its total retail sales went up to P76.5 billion in 2005, up 27.1 percent from 2004.

James Dixon, Visa country manager for the Philippines, said that in terms of card sales volume, which includes cash advances and ATM withdrawals, the company saw a 48.1-percent increase in 2005 to P183.3 billion compared to the previous year.

"The total number of transactions also grew by 34 percent, reflecting the increasing recognition of the Filipinos of the benefits of electronic payments," Dixon said at the Marco Polo Hotel here.

He said that this year, Visa was expecting an increase of about 30 percent in total retail sales.

"With more and more banks offering Visa credit, debit and prepaid products and more merchants accepting Visa cards, we expect this growth trend to continue," Dixon said.

He said that the number of merchants accepting Visa cards reached 69,300 as of end last year.

Dixon added that although Visa was not veering away from its traditional business of providing credit opportunities to Filipinos, it was now pushing for increased use of its debit cards.

"Many Filipinos may have bank accounts but they may not be eligible for credit cards. So the best option for them is to acquire debit cards," he said.

Debit cards are similar to credit cards but the spending limit depends on the amount an individual has in his bank account.

Dixon said Filipinos were now used to the convenience of using debit cards in their purchases, as evidenced by Visa figures on its debit card product.

He said that in 2005, debit card retail sales registered P1.5 billion at merchant point of sales terminals alone nationwide.

He said compared to 2004 figures, debit card sales, which include ATM withdrawals, grew by 67.3 percent to P104 billion in 2005, covering a total of 35 million transactions.

"Visa is committed to offering more and better products and services that help boost the Philippine economy," Dixon said. *Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Oil palm plantation seen in Sarangani

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

SARANGANI PROVINCE—A Malaysian minister is considering Sarangani as the site of Malaysia's oil palm plantation expansion project.

Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, a minister in the Malaysian Prime Minister's Department, said investors from Malaysia would likely come due to ongoing peace talks between the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippine government.

The Malaysian minister told reporters that he personally came to Sarangani to see what investments "we can bring here from even government agencies and the private sector of Malaysia."

Sarangani province has vast tracts of land conducive for oil palm tree growing.

Provincial agriculturist Giuseppe Chew said the province has 21,598 hectares of lands "highly suitable," and another 117,553 hectares "marginally to moderately suitable" for oil palm tree growing.

Dompok said with the basic infra facilities in place, "the potential is there and the possibility that Malaysian investors would come here is big."

Officials here said the farmers and landowners in the province had already signified their "strong willingness to venture into oil palm plantation given adequate technical and financial assistance."

Malaysia is the world's largest producer and exporter of palm oil, producing about 47 percent of the world's supply.

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Our Beloved "Ima"

Natividad Carlos Bacani

(December 22, 1913 – March 19, 2006)

Widow of the late **Dr. Paterno T. Bacani**

of Sasmuan, Pampanga and Mayon, Quezon City

Died in the Grace of our Lord on March 19, 2006.

Her bereaved children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:

Senen & Yolie	Hermel & Delia	Ador & Alice	Nonong & Eve (†) Rota (†)	Monching & Nennette	Bong
Melissa & Steve Alpi Caloy	Patrick & Neysa Gabby Bianca Polly & Jones Santino Butch	Noel Anna Amanda	Jay & Carla Clarisse Justine Nico Celina Veronica Francis	Monchito Kris Sasa	

and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the **Santuario de San Jose, East Greenhills.** Interment will be on **Thursday, March 23, 2006** at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery after the **9:00 A.M.** funeral mass.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Ima's favorite charitable institution, The Divine Mercy Foundation, will be highly appreciated.

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RAFAEL VILLAREAL MARTINEZ

of Mambusao, Capiz and Project 8, Quezon City

*Peacefully joined our Lord and his beloved wife **Inday Morales**; sister **Sosing**; brothers **Alber, Boding, Basing, Oking, Meyong** and **Pedong** on March 18, 2006 at the age of 89.*

His children **Armand & Cora, Abet & Boodie** and **Sandra**; grandchildren **Louie, Chris, Kim, Geo, Ral** and **Fei**; sisters **Nating, Ayong** and **Lorna**, other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz Chapel 15, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on March 23, 2006, Thursday, 12:30 p.m. at Paz Crematory after the 10:30 a.m. Mass.

> *"Behold I shew you a mystery;*
> *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."*
> **I Cor. 15:51**

NAOME SANCHEZ DAYAN

Now rests in the infinite warmth of our Lord. She joined our Creator on March 19, 2006 at the age of 90.

Her children, **Danilo & Rebecca, Dario & Vinia**; grandchildren, nephews and nieces request relatives and friends to join them in prayers for her eternal repose.

Her remains now lie in state at the United Church of Christ in the Phils., Peñaloza St., San Pablo City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, March 22, 2006 at the San Pablo Memorial Park, San Pablo City after the 9:00 am service.

In Loving Memory

On the 1st Death Anniversary
Of our Beloved Tatay and Lolo
Of San Fernando City, L.U. and Paoay, Ilocos Norte

EUFEMIANO BAUTISTA DUQUE

September 3, 1919 – March 21, 2005

From your wife **Conching**; children **Elma, Benedict, George, Romy, Agnes, Myla, Joy, Amy, Allen, Karen, Neil, Irene** and **Alfonso**; sons and daughters-in-law; grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Holy Masses will be offered on March 21st at:

St. William's Cathedral, *San Fernando City, La Union*	5:15 PM
St. Jude Parish, Poro, *San Fernando City, La Union*	5:00 PM
St. Jerome Emiliani Parish, *Alabang, Muntinlupa City*	6:00 AM
St. James Parish, *Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City*	6:00 AM
Our Lady of the Pillar, *Pilar Village, Las Piñas City*	6:00 AM
Blessed Sacrament Chapel, *Valle Verde V, Pasig City*	6:30 AM
Parish of the Resurrection, *BF Homes, Parañaque City*	6:30 AM
St. John Bosco, *Makati City*	6:30 AM
Carmel of St Joseph, *Lucena City*	6:30 AM

In Loving Memory

On the 2nd Death Anniversary of

CARLO PATRICCI D. PASCUAL

March 18, 1977 – March 21, 2004

Holy Masses will be offered at the following churches:

Carmel of the Divine Infant Jesus of Prague, Angeles City	6:00 a.m.
Sacred Heart Chapel, Angeles City	6:00 a.m.
San Sebastian Cathedral, Tarlac City	7:00 a.m.
Immaculate Concepcion Parish Church, Angeles City	7:00 a.m.
Holy Rosary Parish, Angeles City	8:30 a.m.
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Chapel, Cardinal Santos Medical Center, Greenhills, San Juan	5:15 p.m.
Christ the King Parish, Green Meadows, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
St. Jude Parish, San Miguel, Manila	6:00 p.m.
Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Dao St., Makati City	6:00 p.m.
St. Jerome Emiliani and Sta. Susana Parish, Alabang City	6:00 p.m.
Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan	6:15 p.m.

His family and relatives request the readers, especially the lives he had touched, to pray for the repose of his soul.

TERESA SAN AGUSTIN EVARISTO

"Inday"

joined her Creator after living a full and memorable 92 years.

She was the loving wife of the late **Pedro V. Evaristo**

Mother to **Maria Lourdes "Malu"** and **Dodong Cruz** (deceased) and **Gilbert** and **Remia Evaristo**

Sister of **Gloria Gregorius**

Grandmother of **Peter** and **Sari Cruz; Margie** and **Jojo Ignacio** and **Louie** and **Rina Cruz; Gerry** and **Rina Evaristo, Gino** and **Liza Evaristo, Carlo** and **Anne Evaristo, Erika** and **Randy Rodriguez, GP Evaristo Jr., Trina Evaristo, Maia Evaristo, Marilou Evaristo,** and **Joseph Evaristo;**

Great-grandmother of **Milo, Lanz, Cheska** and **Tania, Luigi, Zach** and **Noah, Migui** and **Bea, Sasha, Mikel** and **John,** and **Isabel** and **Caleb.**

She is at Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City where Masses are said every evening at 7 p.m. The funeral is scheduled on Wednesday, March 22 after the 2 p.m. Mass.

Death Notice

Marites M. Guevarra

Oct. 21, 1966 - March 7, 2006

Interment will be on March 22 at Concepcion Shrine, Concepcion, Tarlac after the 8 a.m. Mass.

CLASSIFIEDS

NFA gets 83 percent rating for energy conservation measures

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY RECEIVED AN 83 percent rating for its compliance to the government's energy management program based on last month's on-the-spot inspection conducted by the Energy Utilization Management Bureau of the Department of Energy. Director Mario C. Marasigan of the EUMB led the spot inspection of NFA's energy conservation measures on electricity and fuel consumption last February 20. Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Waldo Flores of the Office of the President personally informed NFA administrator Gregorio Y. Tan of the agency's energy conservation rating during his visit to the agency's central office recently. Under Administrative Order 110 "Directing the Institutionalization of a Government Management Program (GEMP), the government aims to reduce its monthly consumption of electricity (in kilowatt-hours) and petroleum products (in liters) by at least 10 percent through the implementation of an energy management program for a minimum period of three years starting January 2005. The administrative order calls for the judicious use of energy resources through intensified conservation efforts and efficient utilization to help forestall adverse effect of the crude price increases on the country's economic activities. AO 110 also mandates the ten percent reduction both in the average monthly electricity consumption and fuel consumption thru substitution or blending of diesel with biofuels. The NFA also got a perfect score for designating an Energy Conservation Officer manifesting the agency's serious intent to implement energy conservation measures complemented by the issuance of an office order mandating employees to comply with in-house energy conservation directives. Assistant Administrator for Corporate Administration Concepto R. Irigo has been designated as NFA Energy Conservation Officer. Except for the use of coconut methyl ester (CME) blended fuel for service vehicles, the NFA received a perfect score in fuel conservation. The NFA is presently testing CME blended diesel fuel for its official service vehicles.On electricity conservation, the NFA got a high mark for having a 2nd floor elevator service by-pass both at the main and annex buildings and for switching off air-conditioning units from 9 P.M. to 4 A.M., setting the air-conditioning units at fan during lunch time and turning off computers/equipment/appliances when not in use. For more information on the NFA's energy conservation measures, the public may send their inquiries via mobile number 0917-6210927:

CLASSIFIEDS

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of God, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful
Republic of the Philippines
TAWI-TAWI REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
Nalil, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi

Please be informed that the **Board of Trustees of the Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College, Nalil, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi** formally and publicly announces that the **Search for College President is NOW OPEN.**

Minimum Qualifications for the SUC Presidency (Per BOT Res. No. 05-2006):

1. Preferably forty (40) years old but not more than 61 years old on the date of application for the position.
2. Must be a natural born citizen of the Philippines.
3. Must be a holder of a Doctoral Degree.
4. With at least five (5) years of managerial/administrative experience.
5. Must possess leadership and managerial skills within the purview of the needs, thrusts, goals and objectives of the college.
6. Must be of good moral character. Conviction of any crime involving moral turpitude or administrative charge shall be a ground for disqualification

Applicants are requested to submit the following requirements:

1. Detailed curriculum vitaé
2. Photo copy of transcript of records or diploma
3. Neuro-psychiatric evaluation result
4. Medical certificate of physical fitness issued by a government physician from a regional medical center
5. Clearance certificates from:
   - Ombudsman
   - Sandiganbayan
   - Civil Service Commission
   - National Bureau of Investigation
6. Applicant's proposed vision, mission and development plan for the college within a four-year period.

In addition, applicants are requested to submit five (5) sets of formal applications and certified support documents not later than 5:00 p.m. on March 31, 2006 to:

Dr. Enrie A. Caraecle
President, Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology
PASUC-IX Regional Chair
Fort Pilar, Zamboanga City
Tel. No. (062) 991-0643 Telefax No. (062) 991-0777

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PNOC
The Energy Company

Merrit Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
PO Box 2102 MCPO Tel Nos 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors, registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Category C and D, IAC Small, Sub-Category B, Specialty in Electrical Works or General Building – Building & Industrial Plant and have completed within the last ten (10) years at least one (1) supply, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of electrical distribution system contract amounting to at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

**SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE COTABATO EXPANDED RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT
STAGE V, SCHEDULE 1 (7 BARANGAYS)
EDC 06-024**

The Approved Budget is PhP 6,070,541.56 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 180 calendar days.

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o F.T. Tolibas local 5179) starting March 21, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: One Thousand (PhP 1,000.00).**

Site inspection is on **April 3-6, 2006**. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on April 7, 2006 2:00 p.m. at the BAC Conference Room, First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merrit Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Application for eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila not later than **2:00 p.m.** (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of **April 20, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

**The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee**

(PDI--March 21 & 28, 2006)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the MetroBank savings accounts of the late DIVINA B. PERALTA was adjudicated thru Extra-Judicial Settlement by her surviving heirs and shall be released thru S.P.A. Jesus B. Peralta as per Doc. No. 390, Page 77, Book IV, Series of 2006, of Notary Public Henry S. Banares, ARN 19348.

(PDI--March 14, 21 & 28, 2006)

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Globe Kababayan launches IDD Phone Card in Hong Kong

FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWS) in Hong Kong, hearing the voices of their loved ones over the phone provides a vital link to the families and homes they dearly miss. Globe Kababayan understands the need of these modern-day heroes to remain closely connected with their relatives and friends, and has consistently introduced products and services that address their concerns.

As proof of this commitment to uplift the lives of OFWs and their families, Globe Kababayan has formed a strategic alliance with one of the leading IDD phone operators in Hong Kong, Shinetown Telecom, to launch its first-ever prepaid IDD card. Initially available in HK$50 denomination, the Globe Kababayan IDD Phone Card enables Hong Kong-based OFWs to avail of the cheapest IDD Phone Card rates on calls made to Globe Handyphone and TM (Touch Mobile) subscribers in the Philippines. At the introductory rate of HK$1/minute, OFWs enjoy up to 20 percent savings versus the offerings of other IDD Phone Cards in the Hong Kong market. This lets them keep in touch with their loved ones in the Philippines without worrying about expensive costs.

The Globe Kababayan IDD Phone Card was recently launched during the 25th anniversary celebration of the "Mission of Filipino Migrant Workers" at Chater Garden in Central Hong Kong. Globe Telecom and Shinetown Telecom also brought Pinoy artists Dennis Trillo and Pretty Trisza to Hong Kong to entertain the Filipino community.

"The launch of the first-ever Globe Kababayan Phone Card in Hong Kong shows Globe Telecom's unending pursuit to help meet the communication needs of more than 100,000 fellow Filipinos in Hong Kong. OFWs worldwide and their families in the Philippines can still expect a wide range of tailor-fit products and services from Globe in the months to come," affirms Alan C. Supnet, Globe Telecom's head of international OFWs and business development.

This new effort complements the existing cross-border reloading (International AutoloadMAX and International Share-a-Load) and remittance services (G-Cash and Quick Remit and Load) that allow seamless communication between OFWs and their families. Globe Kababayan also extends assistance through a membership program that provides special local and IDD call rates, discounts at selected establishments, and relevant information via an exclusive cellphone menu. Simply text GK to 2242 for free, or visit the Globe Kababayan website: www.globekababayan.com.ph

So what are you waiting for? Tell your loved ones in Hong Kong to try the services of Globe Kababayan and experience the empowering benefits and strengthened relationships that it offers.

ADVIL WINS TWO SILVERS AT 2005 NEW YORK FESTIVAL

After going head to head with hundreds of contenders from all over the world, Advil bags two Silver World Medals from the 2005 New York International Advertising Festivals. The winning entries were the lamppost banners and duratrans that competed in the Festival's Print and Outdoor Category. Created by TBWA\Santiago Mangada Puno, the series dramatized pain brought on by headache making creative use of the medium to get the message across. These were part of the More Powerful than Pain campaign launched in 2004. Photo shows TBWA\ presenting the New York Festival trophies to Wyeth Consumer Healthcare. Shown are (from left): Laveena Pessumal, account supervisor, TBWA\; Rachelle Gamboa, senior product manager, WCH; Tong Puno, managing partner, TBWA\; Gary Mendoza, country manager, WCH; Edwin Kuizon, marketing director, WCH; Isabel Santillan, account director, TBWA\.

UNILAB REACHES OUT TO LEYTE LANDSLIDE VICTIMS

United Laboratories Inc (Unilab), the country's largest and leading pharmaceutical company, donated P600,000 worth of medicines to the victims of the landslide in St. Bernard, Leyte. Unilab likewise conducted a medical mission in the community in coordination with the Leyte Medical Society and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Internally, Unilab launched a donations campaign where Unilab employees donated clothes, canned goods and other items which will be turned over to the affected families. Unilab's immediate response to the Leyte tragedy is consistent with its social mission to take a meaningful role during times of national emergencies. It undertakes such initiatives in partnership with the concerned local chapter of the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) and concerned government agencies. Shown in photo are (from left) Unilab district manager for Leyte and Samar Armando Juanengo Jr., DSWD representatives Pauline Liza Nadera and Bridhette Espejo.

PSBank offers upgraded deposit products

PSBANK, THE COUNTRY'S 2ND largest savings bank, continues to improve customer offerings with its upgraded deposit products using the electronic Signature Verification System (SVS) that has made signature verification simpler for bank transactions. You may now transact with more ease, speed and convenience with your checking and savings accounts using the SVS.

This revitalized over-the-counter convenience started after the success of the SVS launch in 2004. Before the SVS was in place, interbranch withdrawal or check encashment entailed longer waiting time to verify signatures from a transacting client's branch of account. Now with SVS, you can encash checks at any PSBank branch with more comfort making your transaction time shorter and giving you more time for other important matters.

All PSBank branches are equipped with the full range of automated systems unique to PSBank. They make banking simpler and faster, allowing you to transact at any PSBank branch nationwide as if you're dealing with the same ease and convenience of dealing with your own branch of account.

PSBank's improvement of service was proven through a customer survey conducted last year. 98 percent of depositors who transacted over-the-counter with PSBank were satisfied with the service rendered to them. The research also showed courtesy and efficiency of tellers who were given a high rating by the depositors.

You too can experience this personalized and direct service from their bank personnel when you do over-the-counter transactions using your savings and checking accounts.

With assets of about P54.5 billion at year-end 2005, PSBank is the second largest among the 84 thrift banks in the country. The bank accounts for about 16 percent of the total thrift banking sector assets, about 16 percent of total loans, 19 percent of total deposits, and 11 percent of total capital.

PSBank's focus on customer satisfaction, its 45-year track record of solid growth and commitment to providing innovative products and services, reinforces PSBank's reputation for service, stability and strength. PSBank encourages everyone to open an account with them to experience their improved services.

ALLIANCE SOFTWARE OPENS SUBSIDIARY IN TOKYO, JAPAN

Alliance Software Inc, a 100 percent Filipino-owned company, announces the opening of its subsidiary, Alliance Software Japan Inc in Tokyo, Japan. The new company is a joint venture undertaking with Securia Co Ltd. In photo are the management and directors of Alliance Software Japan Inc (ASJ) paying a courtesy visit to Ambassador Domingo L. Siazon at the Philippine Embassy last January to announce the opening of Alliance Software Japan Inc. Shown are (from left): Sherwin D. Yu, director, ASJ; Robert J. Cheng, board chair, ASJ; Ambassador Domingo L. Siazon, Philippine Ambassador to Japan; Mieko Kubo, president/CEO, ASJ; Yoshi Isano, director, ASJ.

BAKER & MCKENZIE MEETS PARTNERS OF QUISUMBING TORRES

John Conroy, chair of the executive committee of Baker & McKenzie recently met the partners of Quisumbing Torres in Manila. Shown are (seated from left): partners Shirley F. Alinea; Jocelyn G. Reyes; Elizabeth B. Opena; John Conroy, Baker & McKenzie chair; Ricardo P.C. Castro Jr., managing partner; and partner Leo G. Dominguez; (standing from left): Mary Grace L. Nitorreda, Quisumbing Torres chief operating officer; partners Cornelio B. Abuda, Pericles R. Casuela, Andre Philippe G. Betita, Rodrigo Lope S. Quimbo; Craig Courter, Baker & McKenzie chief operating officer; and partners Laurence B. Arroyo, Emmanuel S. Buenaventura, Gil Roberto L. Zerrudo and Christopher L. Lim. Baker & McKenzie is a global network of more than 3,100 lawyers and 5,200 other professionals and staff in 70 offices in 38 countries. Quisumbing Torres is its member firm in the Philippines with a total of 49 lawyers, including 18 partners.

ASIAN LIFE
FI CIAL ASSURANCE CORPORATION

ASIANLIFE HOLDS 1ST ANNUAL AWARDS NIGHT

Asianlife Financial Assurance Corp, member of the ATR-Kim Eng Group of Companies, held its 1st Annual Awards Night last Feb. 23 at the Legend Villas. Shown in photo are (from left): chair Ramon Arnaiz; Flora Tayo, DepEd Regional Manager of the Year; Gemmalyn Placa, qualifier; Paula dela Cruz, OL Financial Consultant of the Year; Dra. Hope Lorena Go, 2nd Top OL Financial Consultant of the Year; Tzarmine Alaba and Lorna Cabang, qualifiers.

PeopleSupport expands its BPO services to South America

PEOPLESUPPORT INC A LEADING business process outsourcing (BPO) provider that offers customer management, transcription, captioning, accounts receivable management and additional BPO services, announced that it is expanding its operations to provide customer management services in Spanish to a new Fortune 500 client.

PeopleSupport will provide customer management services in English from its existing world-class facilities in the Philippines, and in Spanish from new facilities in Costa Rica. PeopleSupport plans to build a state-of-the-art BPO facility in San Jose, Costa Rica, and use its proven service delivery platform to expand its operations to this new geography. The new facilities will be custom built to initially service the company's new financial services client. The new facilities are approximately 34,000 square feet and could support up to 500 seats.

"This new client relationship for PeopleSupport will enable the company to expand its operations to Costa Rica, where we see excellent potential to offer Spanish and bilingual BPO services," said Lance Rosenzweig, PeopleSupport's chair and chief executive officer. "In addition to supporting a new client in Costa Rica, our existing clients have shown interest in geographic diversification. Costa Rica offers an educated, Spanish and English-speaking workforce at reasonable wages, and we believe our new capabilities in Costa Rica will be very complementary to our operations in the Philippines."

Meanwhile, centers in the Philippines continue to expand with its recent announcement of the opening of a new recruitment office in Davao City. Operations in Manila and Cebu grow weekly as they actively hire eReps (customer service representatives), transcriptionists, collection associates and other corporate positions. For a complete list of job openings, visit the website at www.peoplesupport.com.

BITS Clips

A State Fair at The Legacy

EXPERIENCE LIFE IN THE GREAT AMERICAN South as Ayala Land Premier presents "A State Fair at The Legacy" on March 26, at the Pavilion of The Legacy at Montgomery Place. This celebratory event marks the completion of The Legacy's Pavilion, and most importantly, the start of turnover for the first tranche of the development. For details about the event and The Legacy at Montgomery Place, call 728-7000. The Legacy at Montgomery Place is located along E. Rodriguez Avenue in Quezon City. Model units available for viewing on-site.

LPMC 1st Post Graduate Course

THE DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS OF THE LAS PIÑAS MEDICAL CENTER shall hold its 1st Post Graduate Course entitled Pediatric Challenges: 2006, from March 22-23, at the Vivere Suites, Alabang, Muntilupa City. Dubbed as Pediatric Challenges, theme for this year's convention aims to update participants in the care and management of different pediatric problems, discuss pediatric diseases of special concern, local and global and to discuss the nurses role in pediatric care. On-site registration fee is P1,000. For more information contact 800-5695 (trunkline) Sedi Chua local 0, M Lany Sayo,RN / Marlyn Flores RN, local 506 and Leslie Gonzales local 508.

2nd Dr. Rodrigo B. Floro Memorial Cup

THE ASIAN HOSPITAL GOLF CLUB WILL HOLD THE 2ND DR. RODRIGO B. Floro Memorial Cup on Wednesday, March 22 at the Palmer Course of the Orchard Golf and Country Club, Gen. E. Aguinaldo Km. 27 Highway, Dasmariñas, Cavite. Registration is on March 22 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. at the main lobby of The Orchard. Shot-Gun Tee-Off will start at 10 a.m. For more information and for pre-tournament flight arrangements, interested parties may call golf directors Dr. Ike Mendoza at 0917-6203900 or Dr. Marc Reyes at 0917-5311911.

20 Spongebob toys now at Burger King

BURGER KING BRINGS 20 EXCLUSIVE LOST IN TIME SPONGEBOB TOYS to you via its 30 restaurant locations. There are 20 ways to get any of the 20 Spongebob toys. Get any number of toys for only P45 each with any single purchase of any of the 10 BK Savers Combos or 10 Value Meals. That's a total of 20 meal options. There are 5 kinds of Spongebob toys available for the little ones every week. Toys available until March 28 only, hurry!

Protect your ideas

TO HELP THE PUBLIC GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO PROTECT their intellectual properties, the Center for Global Best Practices (tel. nos. 842-7148 and 842-7159), in collaboration with Poblador Bautista & Reyes Law Offices, will be holding a seminar entitled, "Essential Guide to Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks" on Friday, April 7, at the Peninsula Manila. The seminar will feature a panel of resource speakers who are experts in the field of intellectual property and are members of Poblador Bautista & Reyes Law Offices, which is renowned for its practice in the field of IP. Lawyer Gilbert T. Reyes, who is a senior partner and head of the Intellectual Property Department, is an authority in Intellectual Property Law and has led IP enforcement initiatives for various clients, including Intel, Levi's and San Miguel Corp. Lawyer Jaime G. Hofileña, also a senior partner, has a vast experience in intellectual property litigation and enforcement and underwent training in Japan in the area of Industrial Property Rights. Lawyer Brigitte da Costa-Villaluz has extensive exposure in IP infringement, unfair competition cases and opposition of trademark registrations, and has handled various cases relating to intellectual property rights enforcement, trademarks and patent registration. The seminar will also feature Lawyer Adrian S. Cristobal, Jr., director-general of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines, as guest resource speaker.

Product FILES

The new 'firebrand' in fashion - FG

ENTER FG! THE NEWEST DENIM outfitter, lifestyle, street wear for teens who want to make the difference. Characterized as an innovative specialist in denim fashion for teens, FG ushers in new techniques and applications in clothing design and development. FG is modern, pop and edgy, hails nonconformity and defies the norms in fashion, rebellious as its wearer. FG combines extraordinary look, comfort and function with its tops and bottoms collection. Check out FG at all SM Department Stores.

Hari welcomes foreign delegates to Manila

ONCE AGAIN, HYUNDAI GATHERS ITS ASSOCIATES FROM 18 COUNTRIES across the Asia-Pacific region to take part in this year's Global Dealers Seminar. The seminar to be held at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel from March 21 to 23, aims to further advance Hyundai as a global brand and to strengthen fellowships among its business partners. In line with these objectives, the conference introduces new business strategies and marketing plans critically developed by Hyundai Motor Company and gives recognition to the year's most dedicated dealers and distributors. Hosted by Hyundai Asia Resources Inc, the conference celebrates business partnerships and camaraderie through corporate gatherings and leisure activities including singing and karaoke challenges and an exciting golf tournament in Cavite. The 2006 Global Dealers Seminar is spearheaded by Hyundai Motor Co's executive vice president Bong Gou Lee, who takes pride in Hyundai's fast-growing reputation for building dependable yet affordable cars for a broad base of consumers from across the globe.

Join the American Idol trivia challenge

TEST YOUR IDOL IQ AND ENTER THE AMERICAN IDOL KNOW-IT-ALL TRIVIA contest. To join, simply log on to www.startv.com/idol, fill out the entry form with your personal and cable subscription details, and answer the following questions: 1) Name one of the 24 American Idol contestants; 2) Name one ad showing during the American Idol show on Star World; and 3) Why do you think you're the ultimate Idol fanatic in the Philippines? Registration is free and deadline for submission of entries is on March 30, at 5 p.m. Selected subscribers will be chosen to pit their American Idol smarts against other fans at the Idol Trivia grand finals to be held on Sunday, April 9, at the Glorietta 4 Park, Ayala Center, Makati City. The winner will get an all-expense paid trip to Los Angeles for Idol's Season 5 finale.

₱1.476B lent to state-run firms as of Feb.

Napocor, Naia, NEA lead list of borrowers

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT LENT P1.476 billion to state-owned companies in the first two months of the year, according to data from the Department of Finance.

The government lends to government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) to help plug their budget gaps.

According to DOF figures, gross lending to GOCCs and GFIs for the first two months reached P2.741 billion, while payment collection from the state-owned firms stood at P1.265 billion.

The National Power Corp. (Napocor), assets of which are offered for privatization, was the biggest borrower from the national government, with P439 million in loans.

Next was the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), which borrowed P300 million from the national government during the two-month period.

Other borrowers included the NPC-Casecnan with P897 million; National Electrification Authority (NEA), P260 million; Technological Livelihood Research Center (TLRC), P93 million; Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), P124 million; National Development Co. (NDC), P24 million; Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA), P20 million; Philippine National Oil Co.-Exploration Development Corp (PNOC-EDC), P20 million; Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), P4 million; Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), P3 million; PNOC, P1 million; Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC), P2 million; National Irrigation Authority-Casecnan, P531 million; and NEA-Veco (Visayas Electric Cooperative), P23 million.

The P1.476-billion net lending to state-owned companies in the first two months of the year formed part of the national government's expense.

Expenses during the first two months reached P177.326 billion. With revenue collection for the two months reaching only P136.923 billion, the national government's budget deficit stood at P40.403 billion.

The budget deficit for the two-month period, however, was well within the P48.1-billion ceiling set by fiscal authorities for the period, but was slightly higher than then P40.1 billion recorded during the same period of last year.

The DOF has called on GOCCs and GFIs to improve their financial operations to lessen their dependence on the national government, and therefore help in efforts to attain a balanced budget by 2008.

For 2006, the government wants to reduce the full-year budget deficit to only P125 billion from P146.5 billion in 2005.

Fiscal authorities are developing a scorecard system for GOCCs and GFIs to encourage better fiscal discipline. Under the scorecard system, state-owned firms would be given revenue targets.

Fiscal incentives or penalties would be meted out based on their performance against the scorecard.

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Ethanol deals hanging in the balance

By Abigail L. Ho

THE SLOW PASSAGE OF THE PENDING BIO-fuels Bill is hindering the progress of ethanol projects in the country, according to the Philippine Fuel Ethanol Alliance.

"Investors have disclosed that the only factor delaying the progress of ethanol projects is the slow passage of the bill," the group said.

Since the Biofuels Bill would mandate the sale and use of bio-ethanol at blends ranging from 5 percent to 10 percent, the group said this would create the market for ethanol.

The Ethanol Alliance said the passage of the bill would generate a guaranteed annual demand of between 200 million and 400 million liters of ethanol.

This, the group said, would encourage prospective investors to infuse capital into the fledgling industry.

According to the group's estimates, at least 14 ethanol production facilities with production capacities of at least 100,000 liters a day would be needed to meet the expected ethanol demand once the bill is passed into law.

Using industry benchmarks, the group placed the required investment to construct, develop and maintain such facilities at a minimum of P2 billion.

This would include the production of crops such as sugarcane, corn and cassava that would be used as feedstock for the plant, the group said.

British firm Bronzeoak Ltd., through local arm Bronzeoak Philippines, will be investing P1.5 billion to bankroll the construction of a dedicated ethanol plant in Southern Bukidnon.

The new plant will have a capacity of 150,000 liters a day, bigger than the plant that Bronzeoak is currently constructing, in partnership with the National Development Corp., in San Carlos, Negros Occidental.

Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said Bronzeoak would put up the plant whether or not the pending Biofuels Bill, which would provide fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to industry players, is passed.

Nestlé awards outstanding health projects

NESTLÉ PHILIPPINES, INC. RECENTLY RECognized the five outstanding health and nutrition programs in the Philippines.

The award-winning programs are:

- The Family Health & Well-being Program, a program initiated by Aloma Abrantes, a concerned resident of Barangay Pagsawitan, Santa Cruz, Laguna
- The Health Care Program of the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP)
- The Integrated Malnutrition Rehabilitation Program, a program initiated by the Municipal Nutrition Committee of Calinog, Iloilo
- The New Lucena LGU Nutri-Health Program
- The Kataguan Watch First Meal Project, a program initiated by a non-government organization based in Baguio City.

The search is part of the "Choose wellness, choose Nestle" program, an advocacy effort by Nestlé to promote wellness.

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Per DTI-NCR permit no. 0971 Series of 2006

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2006

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

C1

EXERCISE eases menopause woes /C4

LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Text us your feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) **E-mail:** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

MAGBAYAD NG TAMANG BUWIS
bago ang **April 17** deadline.
27 DAYS TO GO
Ang Ating Kontribusyon Sa Solusyon

Camp season is here!

Levi's Engineered Jeans invites the youth to compete in freestyle dancing and sporting activities on April 1-2

HOT ON THE HEELS OF THE LAUNCH of Levi's Engineered Jeans, denim wear that's designed for freedom of movement, comes the Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp.

The two-day camp, set to be held April 1-2 at the Market! Market! Activity Center in Fort Bonifacio, celebrates freedom through freestyle dancing and fun sporting activities.

Open to everyone in the 15-25 age group, the Freedom Camp offers freestyle basketball, dancing, football, zipping and climbing.

Participants who compete in all five activities are entitled to a Freedom Camp Loot Bag with free Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp shirt plus Snickers bars and promo items from Mizuno and And1.

There will also be raffle prizes from Levi's such as Levi's Engineered Jeans, watches and eyewear.

Participants in the three competitive activities of freestyle basketball, football and dance-off will vie for top cash prizes of P20,000, P10,000 and P5,000. In addition to the cash prizes, the first-prize winner of each three events shall also receive a Levi's Engineered Jeans gift check, Levi's eyewear and a Levi's watch.

Entry forms are available at participating Levi's Stores at Levi's Glorietta, Rockwell, Alabang Town Center, Festival Mall, SM Megamall, Sta. Lucia East, Gateway, Shangri-La Plaza, Market! Market!, Eastwood Cybermall and Robinsons Galleria, Ermita and Metro East.

BALL expert Ferdinand "Dedick" Manansala will share his amazing basketball tricks.

LORRAINE Lapuz will help aspiring zippers master exciting and colorful zip moves.

ULTRA-ATHLETIC Jeena Lopez will give valuable tips on free climbing.

To request for an entry form via e-mail, text REG LEJ your e-mail address and send to 0917-8566323.

Accomplished entry forms must be dropped into drop boxes at said stores or faxed to 8945425 on or before March 24.

Once registered, participation in the camp must be confirmed by calling the Levi's Freedom Camp hotline at 8945425 from March 27-30 from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

All competitors are required to wear Levi's Jeans. There will be prizes for participants in the best Levi's gear.

Qualifying rounds for the three competitive events will be on April 1-2. Final rounds will be on April 2.

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*Actual unit may vary from photo.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 6503, Series of 2005

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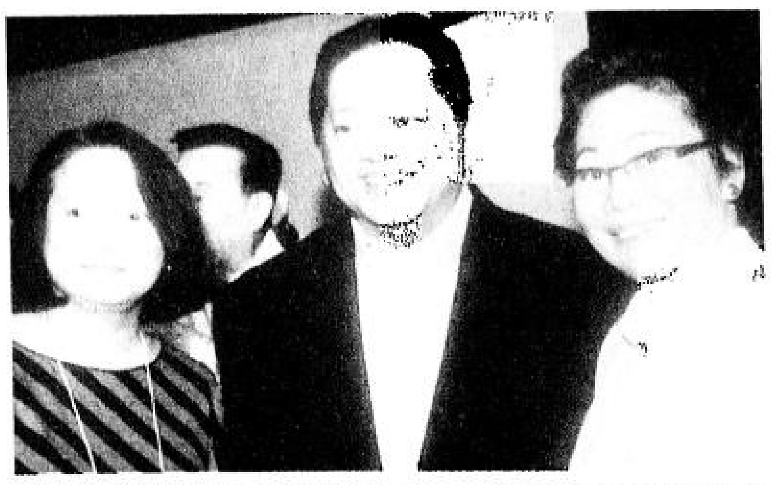
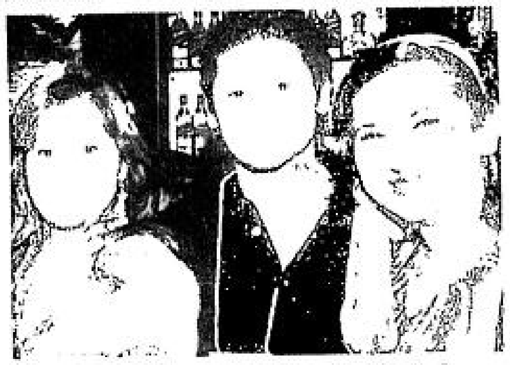

MABUHAY Miles Premier Elite's Angie and Raul Buan with Philamlife SVP Lizanne Uychaco

MARILOU Suarez, PAL's Marilou Mendoza and business magnate James Ong

A new addition to your travel plans

PAL'S Babsie Aragon, Gina Martinez and singer Champagne Morales

ENERGETIC Mabuhay Miles gals: Kay Pangilinan, Eileen Galindez and Antoi Ardiente


MONS Tantoco and Philippine Tatler's Anton San Diego, with PAL's Ria Domingo

INAGIKU fab uniforms are creations of Rajo Laurel.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

HAVING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS for more than six awesome decades is definitely a milestone that not many companies can lay claim to, dahlings. So, when two corporate giants sharing this achievement merge, expect a big blast.

Our favorite pal, Philippine Airlines, and Philam Insurance marked their 60 years of service by introducing a partnership, Travelplans, a comprehensive travel insurance coverage, specially developed for PAL's Mabuhay Miles members, *palanggas*.

Travelplans was launched at the swinging Mezze in Greenbelt 2. Welcoming invitees in their '60s outfit were brilliant **Jaime Bautista**, PAL's hotshot president and COO, and well-respected **José Cuisia**, Philamlife Group's hot president and CEO.

The instant *moi* walked in, I felt the '60s party mood. Mezze's fantastic finger food and booze were being served. A short program was hosted by eye-catching young singer **Champagne Morales** and Philam's **Jing Zara**. *Trés charmant* **Anton du Plesis**, Philam Insurance's dashing president and CEO, invited everyone to join him in a toast.

Well-respected **Henry Sy Uy**, PAL executive vice president for commercial group; **Felix Cruz**, PAL vice president for marketing support; and **Nettes Lalisan**, Philam Insurance vice president for accident and health, raised their '60s-colored cocktails to the travel essential partnership.

Mabuhay Miles' secret weapon and wonder woman, eye-catching **Ria Domingo**, was definitely the hostess with the mostest as she entertained invitees.

A comedy skit by the talented triumvirate of **Leo Martinez, Jon Santos** and **Nanette Inventor** followed. To add excitement to the night, two round-trip business class tickets for exciting Beijing, with a five-day Travelplans coverage, were raffled off. Big winners that evening were beautiful **Eva Abesamis** and... hey, you're right, *palanggas!* It's, oh yes... it's Maurice, which sent my adrenaline up from excitement.

It was a totally fun happening that lasted way, way past 11 p.m. Well, that's partying PAL style, *palanggas*.

Fabulous renovation

It was like the opening of a new wing of Japan's imperial palace when Makati Shangri-La opened the grand doors of its fabulous renovated Japanese restaurant, Inagiku.

Cosmo Manille's sociedad, hotshot expatriates, chic diplomatic corps and business magnates were met by a bevy of Japanese beauties clad in authentic, silk brocade kimonos. They led us through an awesome acrylic-covered fishpond walkway, to the mezzanine, where cocktails and finger food were served, *palanggas*.

The mezzanine had a fab facelift, turned into a traditional Japanese courtyard, with elegant glass-walled fountains. It was a sight to behold.

A samurai struck the gong, the sound reverberating throughout the hotel, to announce the opening of the grand door. Dashing gentleman for all seasons **Tom Zita**, mega chair of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts Philippines, unveiled the restaurant.

Trés, trés charmant general manager, the popular **Jarlath Lynch**, with **Sigi Bierbaumer**, the hotel's elegant resident manager; and good-looking **Randal Linhart**, the hotel's top secret weapon and director of food and beverage who is the brilliant mind behind the magnificent affair, welcomed the chi-chi invitees to the eye-catching Inagiku.

The restaurant now exudes a contemporary Asian vibe that brings together traditional and modern Japanese elements, creating a *trés* sophisticated and modern atmosphere where everyone can indulge in the finest of Japanese cuisine, dahlings.

Mega-talented **Christopher Romine**, the hotel's whiz executive chef, and his gifted rah-rah team, demonstrated their flair for reinterpreting Japanese culinary traditions with an excellent seven-course meal.

Simply divine were the delicate Boiled Zuwai Crab, Shrimp Ball and Mushrooms wrapped in egg and paired with steamed rice, and mushroom in Japanese Soup. For dessert, Manille's super rich and sometimes famous were treated to an exotic Wintermelon and Sweet Miso Sorbet that was to-die-for, *palanggas*.

Among those who couldn't stop saying "this is really a fantastic restaurant, and it's totally one-of-a-kind" were **Grace Glory Go**; fashion chameleon **Tessa Prieto**, dashing in from another appointment, with her southern husband **Dennis Valdes**; brilliant couturier **Rajo Laurel**, who did a magnificent job designing the elegant Inagiku uniforms; Philippine Tatler's super asset, adorable **Chit Lijauco**; my pal **Pepper Teehankee**; fashionably slim **Mons Romulo** and her hubby, suave **Sander Tantoco**; Bulletin's one-of-a-kind, my *palangga*, **Ethel Timbol**; handsome couple **Jolly** and **Gigi Mabanta**; my favorite "it" gal of TV, stunning *femme de monde* **Ces Drilon**; the inimitable **Marietta Santos**; and Metro Society's **Raul Manzano** with **Mia Borromeo**; plus so many others like them, who "swear to be back for more of the best of Japanese gourmand delights," *palanggas*.

PAL'S top honchos, EVP Henry So Uy and VP Bong Cruz; Philamlife Group president José Cuisia, PAL president Jaime Bautista and Philam Insurance president Anton du Plesis

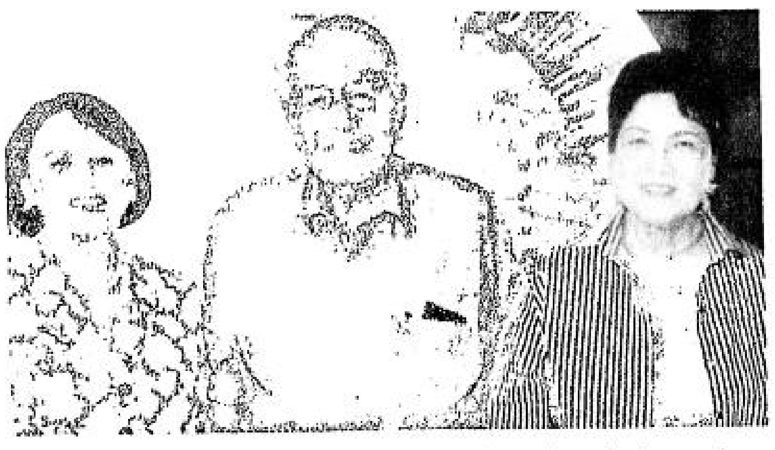
PAL'S Nina Tchoi, HSBC gals Marion Balagot, Claire Ann Yap and Laine Santana

MABUHAY Miles member Boy Garcia

MABUHAY Miles team: (standing) Kit Javier, Mary Ann Timbol, Krissy Enriquez and Isabel Pablo; Peggy Calawod, Jenn Alberto and Binky Hilado

TRAVELPLANS launch team: Philam's Jing Zara, PAL's sultry beauty Val Venturina, Philam's Phil Mio, Jo Talan and Cez Castro

POPULAR Grace Glory Go


LOURDES Juco, Shangri-La's director of sales and marketing; and José and Chloe Periquet

DEBBIE Cuyegkeng of PAL and gorgeous head-turner Abby Arenas

EVA Abesamis and *moi* ready to set off to Beijing

ONE of the guests of honor, business magnate Tonyboy Cojuangco, with hotshot chair of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts-Philippines Tom Zita, and Gretchen Barretto

TOP cardiologist Dr. Randy Francisco and wife, Irene Martel F of Philippine Tatler

GLAM GALS: Shangri-La's Joy Wassmer and TV's Ces Oreña-Drilon

SHANGRI-LA Makati's unmatchable GM Jarlath Lynch and Singapore Airline's mega asset Rita Dy

Energy lost is energy regained

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THE SCENARIO IS ALL TOO familiar. It's Monday morning, the week has barely started.

But waking up and getting out of bed seems difficult. Instead of jumping, you drag yourself out of bed. What seems to be the problem?

Under the weather

No two days are ever alike, especially when it comes to energy levels. But if you've been feeling not quite yourself, maybe you are simply suffering from vitamin deficiency.

Studies show that people who are borderline-deficient of Vitamins C and B may show signs of irritability, nervousness and depression. Natural sources are:

Vitamin C—spinach, broccoli, strawberries, green/red pepper, potatoes, tomatoes, citrus fruits/oranges, guavas

Vitamin B—sweet corn, eggs, brown rice, liver, fish, green vegetables, seeds/nuts, dairy, poultry, lean meats, unrefined cereal grains, legumes (beans, peas), fruits

The saying use it or lose it is true. Exercise is one of the fastest ways to regain your strength. Even if you "feel" you shouldn't do any activity, fight it—maybe you are just plain lazy.

As soon as you hit the road, briskly walking, you will start feeling much better.

Check your iron levels. If you've been feeling worn out, check the color of your tongue. If it is pale, it may mean you have an iron deficiency or are anemic. See your doctor.

Sappers and zappers

Know the things that can drain you versus the things that can recharge you.

Sapping... insomnia, restless sleep, caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol, sleeping pills, stress, negative people, negative emotions, medications (prolonged use)

Zapping... deep, slow breathing, meditation, sleeping/napping, proper diet, hydration (drinking loads of water), a good laugh, music, happy people

Important tips... Sometimes, the wackiest activity can recharge you. Visit the zoo. It's time you revisited it. The Manila Zoo or Avillon (in Montalban) ought to revive your spirits, especially if you stand before an orangutan or monkeys and watch them do their antics.

An aging orangutan at the Tagaytay Highlands zoo has the most expressive funny face.

Increase your carbohydrate intake when you feel drained. This will surely raise your energy.

If you are allergic or have a history of allergies, remember there is such a thing as "red wine" fatigue that allergy sufferers fall prey to. If you wonder why you are not up to par after a night of moderate drinking, know that achy sinuses are caused by drinking red wine that tends to dilate blood vessels and cause sinus pressure.

Reduce your stress by saying no to things you do not enjoy doing or people who do not contribute to your feeling of well-being.

Do something different. Whatever it is, let it be something you've always wanted to do but never got around to doing—like enroll in a class, take up a new sport, etc.

Fight off bad feelings. When you feel sadness building up inside you, think of something happy no matter how silly it may seem. When you replace a sad thought with a happy one, there is a rush of the happy hormones endorphins.

Be with a thoughtful/happy friend. If you need to pour out your sentiments or share the day's frustrations with anyone, choose a friend whose best qualities are being a good listener and a positive confidante.

Relax by soaking in a warm bath. The relaxing oil lavender is a favorite of those suffering from fatigue. To revive, get two whole lemons (halved) and one halved orange and mix them with your bath. While soaking, suck on the half of another orange and feel your energy returning.

Get the skins of lemon/orange and rub the inside of the fruit on your skin (from feet up to neck) while you soak. Make sure your skin is already oiled before rubbing gently. This is great for rough, dry and darkened areas of the body.

Just before any activity, eat a banana and get your carbs/potassium rush.

Remember that energy begets energy. So don't be afraid to use it. And even if you lose it, you can easily regain it.

Join me in the Beauty of Life Health and Beauty Expo, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., March 24-26, Megatrade Hall, Megamall; Wellness Day with Cory-Fun and Prizes, 1-6 p.m., March 25, Megatrade Hall, Megamall.

Why let dandruff spoil your social life?

DR. PIE Calayan

DON'T LET DANDRUFF SPOIL your appearance and social life.

Skin and hair specialist Dr. Pie Calayan said dandruff and the itchy scalp it causes are easy to prevent.

To understand and control dandruff, Calayan said a person should look at his/her lifestyle and daily habits. Is he/she highly stressed at work? Does he/she have a high sugar intake? Does he/she often use styling aids? Is he/she allergic to certain foods?

These questions would help determine why one suffers from dandruff, the specialist added.

Calayan pointed out the adverse effects of having dandruff. Getting caught scratching one's scalp is something both men and women want to avoid.

The specialist in skin, hair and nail treatments, as well as slimming and whitening, is a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology, International Academy of Cosmetic Dermatology, British Dermatological Society and the Philippine Society of Liposuction Surgery. She trained at the Makati Medical Center and Beverly Hills in Los Angeles, California, United States.

Calayan said dandruff could result from many factors like skin irritation, scalp oils, harsh products, stress, even diet. A fungus called Pityrosporum Ovale can cause infection at hair roots, as well as itching and flaking.

She said people should not dismiss dandruff flakes as harmless. Though the crusting and flakes are dead skin from the scalp, they pull hair off as they break loose, she explained.

But she said itchy scalp and dandruff are easy to treat.

Scalp itch could be minimized through less sun exposure, cutting down on hair styling aids like gels and hair sprays, and proper diet, she said.

For easier and faster solution, a specialized anti-itch hair product could be used like a good anti-itch conditioner.

The expert said most conditioners in the market offer nothing more than cosmetic advantages but hardly solve scalp itch and dandruff. A recent test showed some 83 percent of conditioner users still suffer from itchy scalp.

Calayan recommends a specialized anti-itch conditioner like Head & Shoulders Total Conditioner that addresses both the cosmetic and efficacy needs, giving users smooth hair and up to 100-percent itch protection.

With the right hair products and healthy lifestyle, Calayan said dandruff and itchy scalp could be avoided.

Spirits may be behind the unexplainable

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

IN MY RADIO PROGRAM OVER DZMM on March 12, I had as guest a well-known and multi-awarded Bicolana movie actress we shall call Lisa.

She first came to the attention of the moviegoing public as a bold star who appeared in flimsy clothes. She was among those who started the trend of appearing in revealing wet clothes. She had a well-proportioned, eye-popping body.

That was, maybe, 25 years ago. She still looks attractive despite her age, and is still active in the film industry.

Unknown to the public, and even to herself, Lisa is a natural psychic. Ever since she was a child, she could see spirits and the human aura. She didn't know she was the only one who could see them. So she stopped talking about these invisible creatures.

During the radio program, she revealed how things would just materialize in front of her when she wanted them, including one time when a live chicken dropped from out of nowhere in front of her inside her house because she wanted to eat chicken.

She could tell when somebody was going to have an accident, or was going to die. But she kept this knowledge to herself for fear of being labeled insane or weird.

Invisible forces

It took her a long time to come out of the closet. And, when she decided to, unknown invisible forces prevented her from revealing more.

During the show, she went into a trance to channel a message from a spirit. That portion was not heard on the air though there was no power interruption. Listeners could hear our voices, only her voice disappeared.

It happened twice. Listeners from a wide sector of Luzon sent text messages saying they did not hear what she said when she was channeling the spirit. The text messages came from Malabon, Quezon City, Cavite, Batangas, Mandaluyong, Parañaque and Pasig. Somebody taped the whole program and got nothing!

Lisa was alarmed. She asked me what this could mean. I told her not to worry. The spirits just didn't want her to reveal too much. So they muted her voice on the air, although we in the studio heard what she said.

Spirits sometimes do this when they want to prevent people from hearing or seeing something they are not supposed to hear or see. I remember many years ago, we were in Mt. Banahaw, the mystical mountain in Dolores, Quezon, where many supernatural and mysterious things happen.

A nationally famous fortuneteller and psychic was with us. After dinner, about eight or 10 of us sat around the dinning table talking about the mysteries of the mountain. Suddenly the psychic, who is also a medium, went into a trance.

I was taping the conversation from the very beginning. The tape was still on when he went into a trance for a few minutes.

When we played back the tape, we discovered that the portion where the psychic was in a trance disappeared but the rest was recorded.

A similar incident happened also in Mt. Banahaw in the '80s. A medium was in a trance, singing and dancing on the street. She said she was St. Clair. She seemed friendly, so I asked if I could take her picture. She said it's OK but continued, "I don't think your camera can record anything."

I took several shots but when the film was developed, the part when she was in a trance was blank though other shots were okay.

No explanation

How the spirits do this or what force is responsible for such mysterious occurrences no one, of course, can explain. We only know they happen and I have been a witness to these paranormal events on several occasions.

So, it is not your camera or tape recorder, folks. It's the spirits!

Spirit intervention in human affairs is pretty common. But since spirits do not figure in everyday conversations or are considered as possible cause of certain events, no one ever suspects their role in human affairs.

For example, some illnesses are caused by invisible elemental creatures. I just received a call from a former student. Her boyfriend developed itchy reddish spots on his legs after he swept dirt and leaves near a big tree in the backyard of a house in Quezon Province. Another developed canker sores after destroying a mound of earth he thought was a termite's nest.

Some mysterious disappearances of objects, and even of people, are sometimes caused by spirits, usually by elementals. Healer Tony Agpaoa mysteriously disappeared several times when he was still a baby.

On another occasion, a high school student in a Catholic school disappeared while in church and appeared several hundred meters away in a football field. She was possessed by elementals and priests tried to exorcise the spirits out of her inside the church or chapel.

It is important, therefore, to consider spirit intervention as a possible cause though it may at first appear to be foolish or irrelevant.

Hands to hold

THE 60-SECOND Fix Kit is a two-step intense treatment

TO HONOR WOMEN AND THEIR HANDS THAT MOVE MOUNTAINS to end sexual discrimination and sexual violence against other women, Crabtree & Evelyn presents three of its best-selling hand care products in the 60-Second Fix Kit. This two-step intense treatment softens and moisturizes hand in a minute and quenches dry, parched hands in just 60 seconds. Choose from La Source, Goatmilk or Gardeners 60-Second Fix Kit. Until March 26 or while supplies last, receive a mini Bath Gel Gift Set with a purchase of P2,500 and above. Receive an additional guest and hand towel set with a purchase of P4,200. Receive a Bath Towel with a purchase of P6,000.

Crabtree & Evelyn stores are located at 2/L Power Plant Mall at Rockwell; 2/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall; Greenbelt 1; Upper Ground Bldg. A SM Megamall; and 2/L Padre Faura Wing, Robinsons Place Manila.

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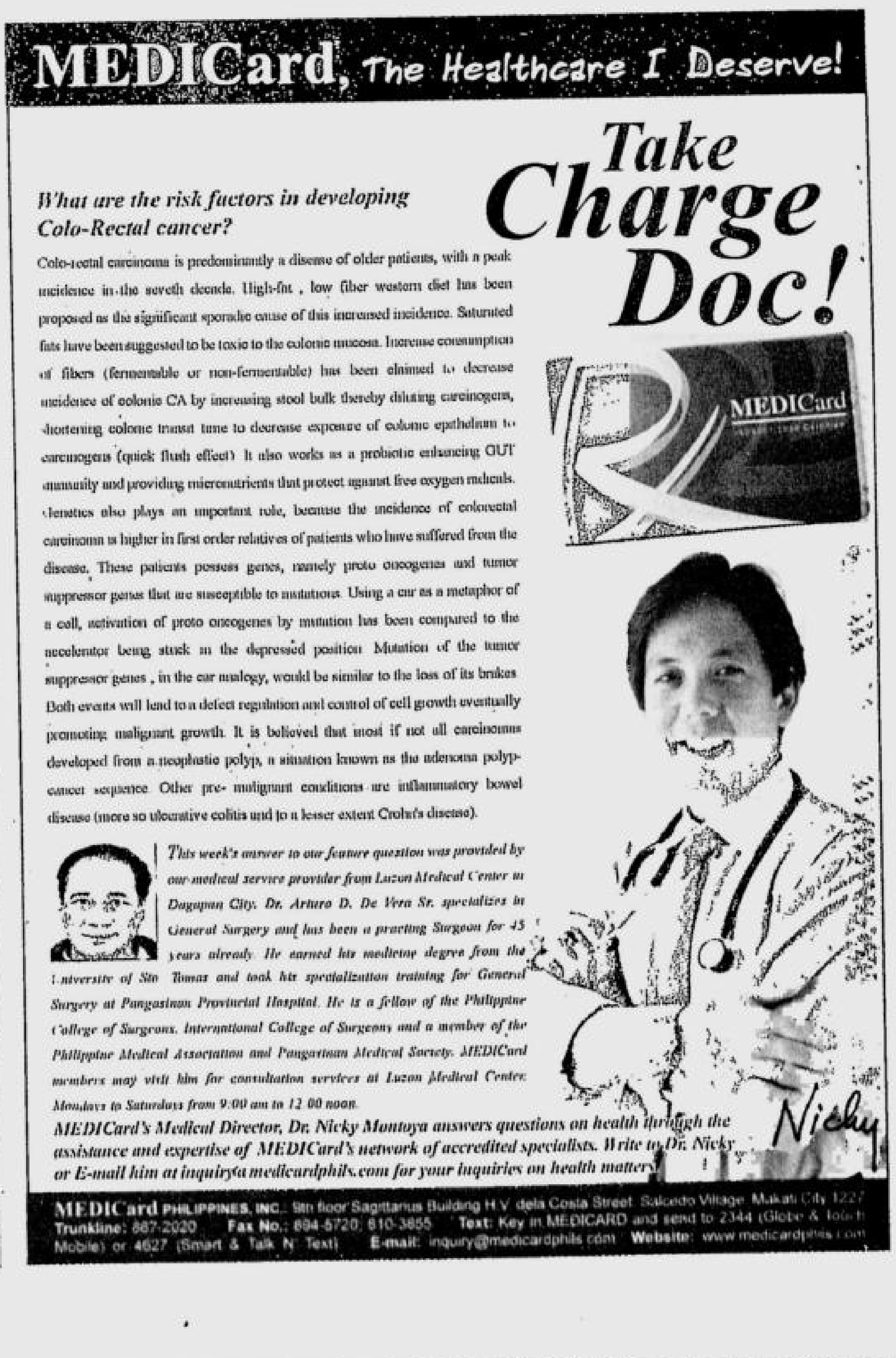
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What are the risk factors in developing Colo-Rectal cancer?

Colo-rectal carcinoma is predominantly a disease of older patients, with a peak incidence in the seventh decade. High-fat, low fiber western diet has been proposed as the significant sporadic cause of this increased incidence. Saturated fats have been suggested to be toxic to the colonic mucosa. Increase consumption of fibers (fermentable or non-fermentable) has been claimed to decrease incidence of colonic CA by increasing stool bulk thereby diluting carcinogens, shortening colonic transit time to decrease exposure of colonic epithelium to carcinogens (quick flush effect). It also works as a probiotic enhancing GUT immunity and providing micronutrients that protect against free oxygen radicals. Genetics also plays an important role, because the incidence of colorectal carcinoma is higher in first order relatives of patients who have suffered from the disease. These patients possess genes, namely proto oncogenes and tumor suppressor genes that are susceptible to mutations. Using a car as a metaphor of a cell, activation of proto oncogenes by mutation has been compared to the accelerator being stuck in the depressed position. Mutation of the tumor suppressor genes, in the car analogy, would be similar to the loss of its brakes. Both events will lead to a defect regulation and control of cell growth eventually promoting malignant growth. It is believed that most if not all carcinomas developed from a neoplastic polyp, a situation known as the adenoma polyp-cancer sequence. Other pre-malignant conditions are inflammatory bowel disease (more so ulcerative colitis and to a lesser extent Crohn's disease).

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Luzon Medical Center in Dagupan City. Dr. Arturo D. De Vera Sr. specializes in General Surgery and has been a practicing Surgeon for 45 years already. He earned his medicine degree from the University of Sto. Tomas and took his specialization training for General Surgery at Pangasinan Provincial Hospital. He is a fellow of the Philippine College of Surgeons, International College of Surgeons and a member of the Philippine Medical Association and Pangasinan Medical Society. MEDICard members may visit him for consultation services at Luzon Medical Center Mondays to Saturdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

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How exercise helps menopausal women

Part One

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

FORTY IS CONSIDERED THE MIDpoint in a woman's life. Half of your life is behind you and the next half is ahead of you. You are now officially "middle-aged."

Turning 40 is also a signal that menopause is not that far away. Though the average age when a woman stops having her monthly period is 51, menopause can happen anytime between the ages of 41 and 59.

Technically, menopause is when you have had no menstruation for 12 consecutive months. The period before that is called perimenopause and the period immediately after is called post-menopause.

Many women dread menopause because they think they are no longer as "womanly" as when they were younger. However, a more positive view of this inevitable life experience is that it can be liberating.

Child-rearing responsibilities are less since the children are usually independent by now. The fear of getting pregnant disappears.

It is the time to consider seriously pursuing dreams that were abandoned because of marital, parental or financial factors.

But to enjoy the second half of your life, you need a fit and healthy body. Exercise can help you have a better quality life pre- and post-menopause.

Heart disease

The hormone estrogen protects a woman from heart disease by keeping arteries relatively free of cholesterol deposits and by raising HDL (good cholesterol) levels.

Ten years after menopause, a woman's risk of heart disease becomes the same as a man's because of declining hormone levels. By doing regular cardiovascular exercises like walking, dancing, and swimming, a menopausal woman can continue to keep her heart and blood vessels healthy.

Osteoporosis

Menopausal women are at high risk for osteoporosis or brittle bones because lowered estrogen levels hasten the loss of bone minerals. Although the best time to build strong bones is before the age of 35, weight-bearing exercise (walking, running, yoga, aerobic classes) and resistance training (weight lifting) prevent further bone mineral loss.

A Tufts University study found that twice a week sessions of simple weightlifting exercises that could be done at home increased bone density by 1 percent after one year.

Balance

People tend to lose their sense of balance as they get older if they do not exercise regularly. This has serious implications for a post-menopausal woman. A good sense of balance helps prevent unnecessary falls that could lead to a wheelchair-bound existence. Exercise not only keeps muscles strong but also keeps reflexes sharp.

Weight gain

According to the Archives of Internal Medicine, "All women are equally susceptible to menopausal weight gain regardless of premenopausal body types."

This means even if you were lean and lanky in your 30s, you can put on 5-10 lb during perimenopause. Most of it will be around your waist and abdomen rather than the hips, buttocks, and thighs.

The change in your shape, from an hourglass to a shot glass can probably be blamed on downward shifting hormonal levels.

Though still unproven in humans, a 2003 study on monkeys found that declining hormones lowered metabolism and increased appetite by 67 percent.

Other possible reasons menopausal women put on weight are reduced physical activity, increased caloric intake especially of sweets, and slower metabolism due to a loss of muscle.

Wayne Westcott, strength training expert, says a sedentary woman can expect to lose about half a pound of muscle a year during perimenopause and a pound a year during the 10 years after menopause. This means by the time a woman is 55, she would have lost 15 lb of muscle.

The muscle loss does not only result in a flabby body but also in less physical activity since a weaker body does not have the endurance and stamina for exercise.

A pound of muscle requires 5-10 calories per day to maintain itself. A loss of 15 lb means 75-150 fewer calories per day. Over time, weight gain slowly creeps in.

But it's not as hopeless as it seems. Exercise can help keep the pounds away. A 2002 study found that sedentary menopausal women had 38 percent body fat compared to fit women who only had 25 percent body fat.

Resistance exercise or weight lifting is the best way to rebuild muscle you have lost. Aerobic exercise helps keep the weight down because of the calories burned during the workout and cellular changes that make you a more efficient calorie burner.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Standing pelvic tilt

THIS EXERCISE soothes aching lower backs by stretching tight muscles in that area.

Equipment:
None

Exercise technique:

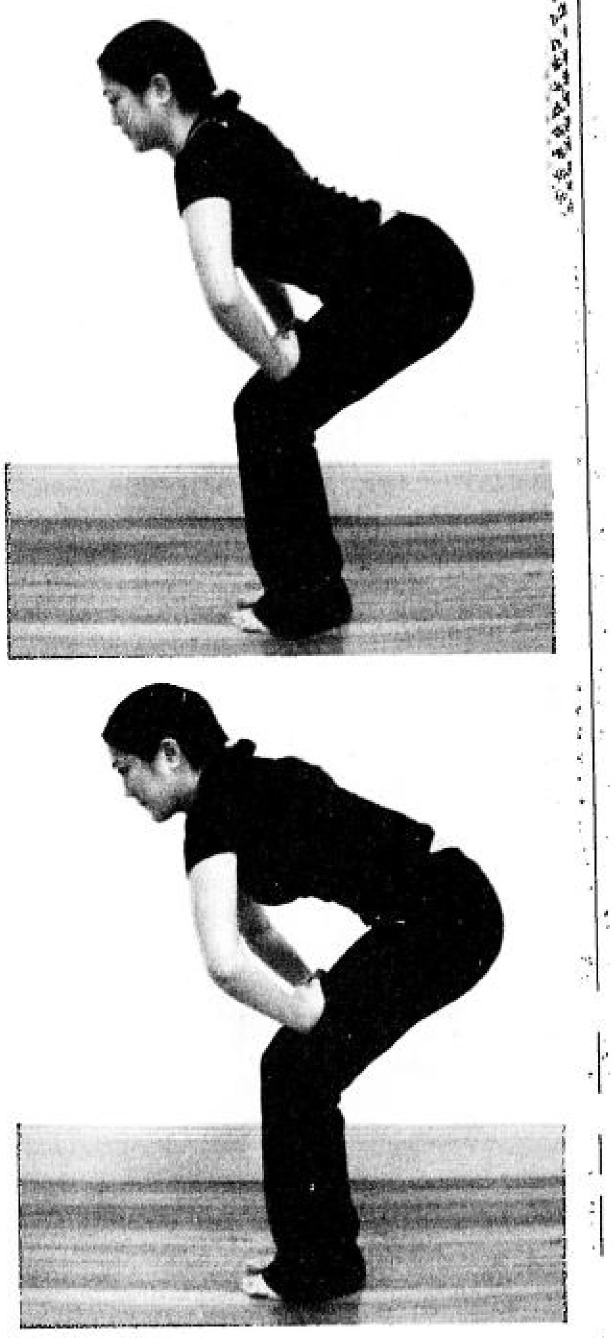
1. Stand with feet hip-width apart. Come into a squat position by bending your knees and pushing your buttocks backward. Place your hands on your thighs.
2. Pull belly button toward your spine as you tilt or curl your pelvis under.
3. Return to starting position.

Performance tips:

1. Exhale as you tilt pelvis under; inhale as you return to starting position.
2. When getting into the squat position, pretend that you are about to sit on a stool.
3. When you tilt your pelvis, imagine trying to bring the bottom of your hips toward the middle of your waist.

Repetitions:

You can do the exercise as a static stretch (hold the pelvic tilt for 15-20 seconds) or as a dynamic exercise (tilt and release for 10 repetitions).



New sports supplement line launched

HEALTHY OPTIONS HAS LAUNCHED UNIversal Nutrition, a new line of premium sports supplements.

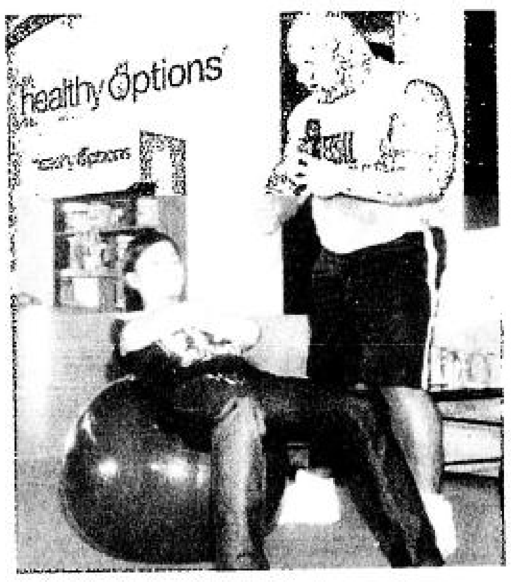
The launch, "Confessions of a Gym Junkie," was held at the atrium of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, with professional athlete Joe Ladnier, a former Mr. Florida State and the first man in history to break two 100-lb total in the 220s class, as guest of honor.

Ladnier, together with host Chinggay Andrada, demonstrated some useful exercises using a gym ball and light dumbbells that busy people can do at home or the office.

He assured women strength and power training did not necessarily mean oversized arms, legs and thighs. What was important, he said, was to get the right exercise.

He stressed the need for the right nutritional supplement to ensure a healthy body and recommended Universal Nutrition, a leading and comprehensive line of nutritional and sports supplement.

Gary Sacks, Universal Nutrition's senior sales executive who came to Manila with Ladnier, said the line supported a holistic approach to a healthy and fit lifestyle with products based on scientific research and stringent tests.



JOE Ladnier demonstrates exercise moves with Chinggay Andrada.

The line has over 100 different products to suit everyone's requirement.

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SUMMER MUST

The Bert Lozada Swim School, the country's premier swimming institution, welcomes back BLSS Camp Aqua, its Summer Learn-to-Swim program at more than 33 venues nationwide. On March 27-June 10, BLSS Camp Aqua will offer two-week swim courses or multilevel swimming programs from the Parent and Child Program for Infants up to the Adult Fitness Swimming Program. BLSS Camp Aqua enrollees can avail of special promos and receive Speedo and Mossimo packages.

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